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DISNEYLAND AT 35

Periodically I have to make my pilgrimage down to Anaheim to visit Disneyland and I always seem to write the same story. This time I got into the lot early and was in the holding pen [Main Street] for the opening ceremony. Several thousand of us waited while the voices of the various Disney characters said really nerdy things then at the stroke of nine the ropes were dropped and the park came to life. People ran in all directions to be first in line for the various rides and I headed for the River Queen to have breakfast with a flock of junk food sparrows. They come inside now and sit right on your plate waiting. After many generations they are as addicted to white flour and sugar and crapola as the rest of us.

It's \$27.50 for an adult to get into Disneyland. You get unlimited rides and exhibits, but I am always bugged, because I never go on any of the rides and basically I have to pay the money just to go in and walk around. I checked out everything new while I was there, stopping to look up at Splash Mountain. The opening is vaginal and it looks like just the ride for people who are interested in resuffering their birth trauma. The cars speed along a track and at the peak of the ride they shoot out of the womb and down into the water, the newly reborn screaming all the way. From where I was standing, I could hear the loop of *Oh, Suzanna* going on forever as the Mark Twain riverboat slid around Tom Sawyer's island on its 35-year-old track. Canoes loaded with tourists rowed by.

There are some ideas too horrible to mention like Brer Bar, a fast food joint near the Country Bear Playhouse. Everything leads into everything else in Disneyland, usually a store stuffed with

furry replicas of Mickey Mouse or Pooh Bear or Brer whatnot. Just a spoonful of hype helps the products go down, the products go down. Call this supercapitalisticexpatrioticious. I look at all this sculptured antiquarianism and think of the millions of dollars of sophisticated electronic equipment in the tunnels beneath it all, the hi-tech world of the present that supports the low-tech world of the past. Here are artificial streams run by hydraulic pumps. It's total artifice, often quite beautiful. There were people with camcorders aimed at other people with camcorders everywhere and I realized I was in a thousand home movies. Hi mom! There is a complete ranch with a petting farm and I expect all of the local animals are now accustomed to the roar of the Big Thunder Mountain Railroad. The train passes every few minutes. Santa is over there with a little girl on his lap, his hand on her knee. Click! Goofy is wearing Santa drag and a Japanese tourist tries to get his wife to pose with Goofy, but she shakes her head no and waves her hands. She looks fearful of Goofy and he is kind of a monster with those teeth. Kids ride up and down on replicas of Dumbo as the camcorders capture their childhood for future embarrassment. In Tomorrowland, it's white boys on Motown, very loud. A little blonde girl rides by in her stroller with fingers in ears, squinting. I eat an overpriced Space burger and watch people posing with Mickey Mouse as a white boy sings about Papa having a brand new bag. Kids lean out of skybuckets in the sky above the Sleeping Beauty's castle and the monorail zips off toward the Disneyland Hotel for another load of money. Racing cars zip around their tracks as people climb into small scale submarines for a ride around the pool filled with plastic and plaster of paris crabs and octopi.

Looks like an old familiar bag to

me. One of the problems with Disneyland is the narrowness of the park's theme. One gets very tired of seeing that stupid mouse on everything. At least over at Knott's Berry Farm, there is variety. You can go to Snoopy's camp and see Charlie Brown and lots of Schulz's characters walking around with girl and boy scouts and in the shops you see as many Ninja Turtles as you see Snoopys. It's \$21 for the day at Knott's and I think it's more family and little kid oriented. The rides are certainly more terrifying. Anyone who has every been on Montezooma's Revenge will never forget it. I look at the antique vehicles and realize that the working vehicles of the past have become the objets d'art of the present. A stagecoach built in 1859 with iron-encased wooden wheels. This is real craft, a vehicle made by a man's hands that has lasted over a century. What car of today has so lasted?

Stunt guys demonstrate how the bad guys and good guys fight it out on film, how they take the falls. Total macho. All the girl in gingham does is titter and scream as the men handle all the rough stuff. A woman was nothing but a prop in the old westerns.

I hear the sound of a Sunday morning prayer coming out of Chapel of Reflections juxtaposed with the screams of the people in one of the cars Montezooming downward. Near me passes the paddlewheeler, the Walter K, named for Walter Knott whose berry stand once stood out here at the edge of his farm in what is now Buena Park.

Knott's is comfortable. There are more trees, more places to sit and rest, and the food is cheaper and more varied than it is in Disneyland. It's still junk, but it hurts less when you don't to pay gourmet prices for it. Disneyland tends to be all fantasy even when it makes a gesture in the direction of history. There is more of the real history of this area at Knott's. The Spanish background of the area is available and there are Mexican restaurants and beautiful examples of Aztec art and sculpture. The only thing really yupped up was the Christmas Faire hustle which is pretty much the same as the Harvest or Dickens Faires though with the emphasis on shopping and not upon entertainment. I hate these rip-offs where you have to pay to get into a place where you are going to buy things. Only in America will people pay for the dubious privilege of being sold a lot of bourgeois crafts and general crapola. I get hustled enough in places where I don't have to pay to get in.

Still I enjoyed Knott's. I liked the country music in the background and the lazier atmosphere of the place. There is a complete replica of Independence Hall in the parking lot there. There's a ghost town with all of the original crafts represented and there is Mott's Miniature Museum, one of the most incredible collections of miniatures in the world, some of them so tiny they require magnification just to see their form. You could spend a day in this little museum and still not see all of the little replicas.

While Knott's is a great repository of the past of California, a place where you can ride around on a real stagecoach, Disneyland has assimilated

the present and the future. There you can see Michael Jackson in 3-D and take a Star Wars tour.

Getting to either of these places is not going to be fun. Driving in Southern California is total madness. People ignore the speed limits and have no patience with those who do not already know the way. I tried to keep my rental car under 60 and people went by and around and almost through me as though I were sitting still. The signs are useless unless you already know where you are going. Disneyland is on Harbor and Katella in Anaheim, but the first sign you see that says Disneyland is in Anaheim and if you get on Harbor going the wrong way you can wind up in South Africa. Knott's is on Highway 39 or Beach Blvd and you get there after about eight miles of junk food restaurants that look the same here as they do in Nebraska or Illinois. There are no landmarks to guide you in the valley and when I looked on either side of me all I saw was a ring of dark smog. In the Bay Area, we use the mountains, the buildings, bridges, etc., to guide us around. Driving in the valley is chaos and if you stop to ask directions you find that the people do not know where they are. I got wrong directions everytime and only got where I wanted to go by sheer luck. There are more motels around that area than anywhere else on earth. It's true. The entire town of Anaheim was nothing but a truck stop between orange groves when I was first through there in 1943; today, it is a city made up of motels and chain restaurants.

All because an animator named Walt Disney wanted to recapture his childhood by rebuilding a scale model of it in Orange County in 1955. Well, he was laughed at at the time and the project was called Disney's Folly. Today, Disney is one of the only two entertainment conglomerates remaining in American control. -C.G.

Advocates of puritanism in the United States should take lessons in morality from the Russians. In Russia it was forbidden to sleep in the same hotel room if you were not married, unless you were a foreign tourist. Thus, a problem unmarried people of all ages faced was, Where could they make love? In cars? Few Russians had them. At home? The housing shortage made that impossible. The solution was the trains. Public transportation is very cheap in the USSR. The sound trip between Moscow and Leningrad was paradise for illegitimate lovers and people who just liked sex. Jane [Fonda] and I didn't realize this when we took the sleeper to the former capital of the czars. Our compartment resembled a miniroom in a three-star hotel: lackered wood, a copper lamp on a mahogany table, velvet curtains, a doll's house bathroom with a shower and toilet. We spent a very passionate and intimate evening. Late at night, when I couldn't get to sleep, I decided to take a walk in the corridors. I came upon a sleeping car. The first compartment comprised six berths and on each one there was a couple. Twelve people were making love. The rest of the carriage was not quite as active, but I had the impression that people were not bored.

Roger Vadim, 1986.

SOAPOPOLA

Misogynist of the month: David Lynch. I hated ERASERHEAD more than anything I ever watched and I hated BLUE VELVET almost as much and I have avoided TWIN PEAKS since watching the tedious pilot which I hated almost as much as BLUE VELVET. I don't like sadism. I don't hate women and I don't like to see them punched around, tortured, and generally abused, and I don't think the fifties were funny at all. Or campy. Or even very interesting with a few minor exceptions. I hate the droning lugubrious music that backs up the surreality of TWIN PEAKS almost as much as I hated the themes of most of the radio soap operas I had to listen to in my mother's kitchen when I was growing up. TWIN PEAKS is like something Igor would daydream about on the way back to Vic Frankenstein's lab with a stolen brain. T-shirts are selling on Telegraph Avenue that read I KILLED LAURA PALMER! Moe is selling THE DIARY OF LAURA PALMER in his basement. College students have poster pictures of Laura's rotting corpse on the walls of their dorm rooms and local Stop signs are being modified to read Stop Bob and they don't mean Joe Bob Briggs or the pipe-smoking Bob of Subgenius fame. That TWIN PEAKS is running third in the ratings this month is ample testimony to the decaying state of a significant share of the public psyche. What is so irritating is that my attempt to avoid this dung heap is being subverted at every turn because I know people who are Lynch addicts and they tell me all about TP. Soaps are the slime of our time. Would you believe that people go and sit in the Bear's Lair, the beer joint at UC, and watch stuff like THE GUIDING LIGHT and THE YOUNG AND THE RESTLESS? With T. S. Eliot, Shakespeare and Dostoyevsky and Tom Pynchon lying closed on the table before them, these young people sit there lusting after soap op stars every afternoon. Where ARE the brain police?

If you understood any or all of the above rap, you need help. Check in at your local mental health clinic post haste.

C.G.

Hank Ketchum is making the rounds promoting his autobiography, THE MERCHANT OF DENNIS. Ketchum is 70 now and still believes Dennis is everyboy. Well, he's not, but the character certainly influenced a lot of cartoonists. Watterson's Calvin has been doing Dennis' schtick for a long time now with his dad standing in for Mr. Wilson. The son Dennis was based on is now 44, divorced, and living in Ohio. If you give any serious thought to the comic strips extant these days you have to realize that most of them were created a hell of a long time ago and reflect the era of their creation, not the contemporary world. This is neither good nor bad per se, daily strips being the running gags most of them are, but it does say a lot about the cartoon editors of the major papers and the readership they have in mind. If you go for continuity, you're going to be conservative as were men like Harold Gray, Milton Caniff, and Charles Schulz just to name a few. The contemporary may appear briefly, but always as a negative. Ernie Bushmiller made fun of the external appearance of beatniks and hippies and would be poking the same fun at newavers and spikers and baldies today if he were alive to do NANCY. Caniff attacked protestors in STEVE CANYON in the same superficial manner, consigning them to Maumee [mommy], and Al Capp bugged the hip community no end when he made fun of Joan

Baez as Joanie Phoney. Point is the fads and fallacies of the present are never permanent and the strip cartoonist who wants to be around for a long time has to bear this in mind. At the same time the older strips have a way of enforcing stagnation and reenforcing what many of us consider negative ideas. Don't tell me it isn't racist as hell for Orphan Annie to have an Indian body servant named Punjab who calls her Missy in 1990. It is. Not only are some of the older strips that survive in the dailies and Sundays racist and sexist to the core, but the younger artists and writers who have taken them over seem to be totally unaware of what they are perpetuating. I agree with Watterson that no character should go on indefinitely and none should ever be taken over by assistants. When Chic Young died, Blondie should have been laid to rest with him. After all, who needs Blondie now that we have The Wonder Years? [chuckle]

Ah, illusion and reality in our time. Don't you love it? I don't see why we are sending half a million young American mercenaries to fight a desert war in defense of a country where a woman can't even buy a soft drink in a store. Why don't we just send Sly Stallone, Arnie Schwarzenegger, Mel Gibson, and Bruce Willis? Couldn't these guys just wrap it all up in a day or two? Be just, too. Millionaires fighting to protect millionaires. Funny how the real wars are always fought by young teenagers whose dads are electricians and plumbers and steel metal workers and Superman and Little Orphan Annie are never around when there's a mine field to cross. Television has become telediversion and most of us watch a film and leave with the delusion that something significant has happened. The comic strip doesn't even have that effect. Nanoseconds of cathartic chuckles over breakfast about a world of symbolic beings that have no natural bodily functions.



Sometimes I think about America (after looking at Life or The Saturday Evening Post) and it's like a foreign country. I never went to any of these American things: sock hops, drive-in movies, homecoming games, pajama parties. I might as well be reading National Geographic about Brazil. I never saw a cheerleader with pompons on her ass. I never got laid in a car. I used to look at Archie comics like they were science fiction. Archie and Judhead, Betty and Veronica, with those oxford shoes and school letters on short-sleeved sweaters: Where did all those kind of people live? Not where I lived. -Pete Hamill in **LOVING WOMEN**.

...the word Dixie came from New Orleans. The French word for ten was dix. And they had a ten-dollar (or franc?) bill with the word dix written on it and all those crazy men who worked on the Mississippi river would get drunk and say, *got to get down to New Awlins and get me some of them Dixies*.
-Pete Hamill in **LOVING WOMEN**.

THE CARTOONIST AS SAILOR-SUPERHERO

I tried to explain to Miles about being a cartoonist and Miles said he thought that if I had any talent at all, that was the way to waste it.

-Pete Hamill in **LOVING WOMEN**.

Though it is a typical potboiler, some of you might enjoy reading Pete Hamill's novel **LOVING WOMEN** because the lead character is an eighteen-year-old cartoonist with a penchant for Milton Caniff and Roy Crane. The protagonist makes some extra money by selling drawings of sailors and their wives and girl friends while he is stationed in Pensacola, Florida, in 1953. Ironical that the fine artist in this book rejects comic books and cartoons, yet this book is filled with the kinds of characters and situations that are the substance of most contemporary alternative comic books. **LOVING WOMEN** gives you an idea what it was like before the ascendance of underground and newwave comix. Had Hamill's young cartoonist come along in the mid-sixties he might have been doing posters for Bill Graham or Chet Helms. The book is in paperback.

C.G.

The convergence of the movies with both ads and cartoons makes sense, because the ad and the cartoon each present a fantasy of perfect wish fulfillment: that is, wish fulfillment that seems both immediate and absolute, arising, on the one hand, from a purchase (which will make life perfect *now*) or, on the other hand, from the animated spectacle itself (in which the universe appears responsive to one's wishes). This effect has been compounded in the movies, which now purvey a wish-fulfillment fantasy as extreme as, and far more compelling than, any Coke spot or Tom and Jerry free-for-all.

Mark Crispin Miller
HOLLYWOOD THE AD
ATLANTIC MONTHLY 4/90



VIDIOTIC

Television has equipped us as citizens to live only in an all-consuming--and thereby forgettable and disposable--present, blissfully unaware of the historical tides and movements that speak not only to this moment, but to our vast future. Television offers Americans nearly the same thing everywhere...on dozens of clone-like channels, conferring a kind of cultural peerage on a small group of commentators. Issues and ideas are merely pushed around the plate, never digested, by the same people...engaged more with a subtle one-upmanship among themselves and their to alter egos than with the advancement of our understanding. In the worst of our television, we are addicted to personality, to the breathless embrace of celebrity, ensuring as we go a tyranny of the televised over the great mass of the untelevised.

-Ken Burns

I have been on television several times in my career and each time I had something I wanted to say to whoever was out there listening and each time I found myself fit into a preconceived pattern determined by the format of the show. I didn't get to say what I had intended at all. I got a few short lines in relation to what the director wanted to say with the entire program. I do not blame the people on whose shows I appeared. I was just a part of the whole known only to them. The first time I thought it would be great to be on television, to watch the great me up there spouting off. I even expected to get some mail about the show. I didn't get a single piece of mail. I learned a lot watching the entire show, mainly that I didn't like being a part of anyone else's scene. I had long known that or I would not have started this personal newsletter. I would have gone on writing columns for other people's fanzines.

What I learned was that tv does what it does no matter who is sitting in the chair, no matter who is reading the questions off the prompter. People become addicted to tv and they watch the tube no matter who or what is on it. The loners have it on from their morning coffee until they pass out in the wee small hours of the next morning. I read a biography of Johnny Carson recently and when I finished I thought *this man thinks people watch him, but those same people were watching Steve Allen and Jack Paar long before he moved into the Tonight slot and they will be watching whoever replaces him*. I only watch tv indiscriminately when I go to

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Nebraska to visit my mother. She is an addict, though always in denial. If I turn off the set, it is back on in a few minutes, because she just wants to see who Oprah or someone has on or she wants to watch the weather. All day long my mother watches a succession of soap operas and game shows and news clips and when there is nothing on she has umpteen video tapes of old sitcoms that she watches over and over. She does not watch the Tonight Show, because she is still mad at Ed McMahon for telling her she was one of the few chosen to win a million dollars. She knows nothing about computers and was truly surprised to find that a number of other ladies in her condo were also winners in the making. I haven't watched the Tonight show in years, mainly because I can only take a little bit of stand-up comedy and when I do watch comedy I want something a lot snappier than Carson's tired-out celeb jokes. For awhile I was watching Letterman, but the format has become a predictable as Carson. I enjoy Letterman's stunts, but to get to them you have to wade through so much crapola, it's not worth the eyestrain. I hate all that jiveass rah rah stuff that is used to open most of the talk shows. I'm not against applauding or cheering when there is something worth the accolade, but most of what happens on these shows is hype for lame products.

-Clay Geerdes

PROTECTING SOURCES

...during World War II Prime Minister Winston Churchill decided that British towns and villages about to be bombed by the Nazis could not be warned in advance because that might signal to the Germans that their secret codes had been broken. If warned of an impending attack, British citizens would of course take defensive action; they would scramble for shelters. German spies would certainly pick this up, and their codes would immediately be changed, thereby setting back Britain's overall war effort. Churchill and other British leaders simply had to swallow hard and accept the fate of the bombing raids because the alternative would be even more disastrous.
Wolf Blitzer
TERRITORY OF LIES, 1989.

I should have known better than to watch THE DREAMER OF OZ, but I like John Ritter and I thought he would do more than walk through the part. Lyman Frank Baum was a creative man with incredible energy. In his 64 years, he started businesses, edited papers, fathered four sons, wrote over a hundred books, many of them under pseudonyms, and made films of several of his favorite OZ stories. His mother-in-law, Mathilda Gage, read his earliest stories, liked them, and encouraged him to try to publish them. DREAMER manages to deal with the life of Baum in a stream of sentimental scenes, some of them so poorly contrived as to make the viewer want to kick in the tube. It you're not a mindless clod, you hate having your emotions manipulated and this amateurish film not only manipulates again and again but degenerates to the totally maudlin at the point of Baum's death. Ritter makes this incredible man seem like a total schlemiel with a nagging wife and a disapproving mother-in-law. The Baums' life is wrenched into the mundane structure of a cheap melodrama. One would think from this that the man had no friends at all and the truth is he was surrounded by companions all his life.

I don't know who did the research on this turkey, but one would think anyone could look up the facts about Baum. Hell, a call to any of the many chapters of the various Oz societies would have answered all the questions. Relax, I am not going to list all of the errors here, but let me share one example of the thoughtlessness of this film with you. Baum has been onstage during the performance of a melodrama in which he was acting and a tired actor torched the backdrop and set the theater on fire. Everyone hurries outside. Baum and his wife, Maud, are out in the crowd. She picks that moment to tell him she is pregnant and he is excited. He laughs and picks her up and dances around--while the fire rages behind them. Do you believe the insensitivity and the stupidity of this? What would Baum or any human being be doing in a time of crisis like this? He would be in the theater trying to put the fire out and making sure his fellow actors were safe and trying to salvage some of the costumes and props that were their bread and butter. The people who directed this film have no conception of how people act during a crisis. A few scenes into DREAMER and they destroy Baum's character by portraying him as a silly clod who will dance around with his wife while his friends are in danger. Basically, whoever put this film together doesn't have the vaguest idea about how to create character on film.

Baum was an actor and he was always more passionate about staging his stories and filming them than he was about the writing. None of this figures in DREAMER. One would think that he flirted with the theater as a young man and forgot about it later. Not one, but five of his OZ stories were filmed, though the only one extant that I have seen is THE PATCHWORK GIRL OF OZ. Our local Pacific Film Archive has a copy.

As an OZ fan, I was pleased to hear that Baum was finally getting some recognition after being ignored for so long, but DREAMER is more defamation than praise and I am deeply disappointed as are I am sure other Ozmopolites. -Clay



©Mike Stengl 1991.

Ever notice how television heroes reinforce the authority of the government and the business elite--all those heroic cops, lawyers, judges, and soap op high rollers and all those snide putdowns of the déclassé--namely ordinary folks like you and me. What if the hero was a down and out Third World wino with AIDS or an overweight electrician with acne? Let me tell you, when we had the big Earthquake in 1989, the heroes who climbed up onto the collapsed freeway and pulled people out of their cars and got them down to safety were ordinary street dudes with their values intact and I've yet to see one movie of the week about these people.

I saw Madonna's latest bit of post-Warholian decadence, *Justify My Love*, and watched the Queen of Sleaze wasting a lot of time on Nightline justifying that slice of boring rot. Talk about inarticulate. I loved it when Madonna, looking like a plastic copy of Marilyn Monroe, countered Feminist criticism, saying she controlled her own career "and isn't that what feminism is all about?" What the show said to me is here is a woman who made over 26 million dollars last year and she has no more sense of style and decorum than to go on National television looking like a hooker. -C.G.

World of Fandom Magazine has published *The Official Rat Fink*, a collection of stories about Big Daddy Roth's infamous rodent illustrated in the grossest manner by Ric Sloane. \$3.25 should get you one from POB 9421, Tampa, FL 33604-9421.

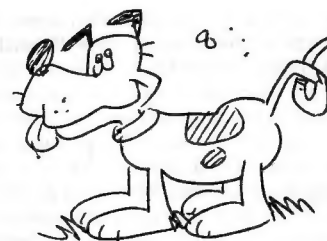


©Big Daddy Roth. 1991.

BEFORE LOTTO

Walt Wallet, star of the comic strip *GASOLINE ALLEY*, took a flier on ninety shares of stock in the fictitious Rubber Keyhole Corporation, and soon found himself wholly preoccupied with the gyrations of the market. He drew a graph to plot his stock's progress, and decided that when the black line crawls off the paper at the top, I'll sell. When Rubber Keyhole subsequently took a sharp nosedive, Walt consoled himself with the thought that it was only the big boys shaking off the pikers. I knew it was going to happen all the time. Just think how ignorant I was of all this three weeks ago, then when Rubber Keyhole righted itself and nearly doubled in value, Walt's friend Doc advised him to sell out while he could. Nobody ever went broke taking a profit. True enough, Walt conceded, but nothing ventured, nothing gained, and in the time-honored tradition of amateur investors everywhere, he decided to stick it out a little while longer; after all, it would be a shame to sell out before Rubber Keyhole reached its peak.

1929: THE YEAR OF THE GREAT CRASH
William K. Klingaman, 1989.



The latest TWISTED IMAGE is \$1/stamp from Ace Backwards, 1630 University Avenue, Apt. 26, Berkeley, CA 94703. Ace is a unique strip cartoonist, right on the mark with his social and political parodies. It is easy to see why he is not palatable to the Established syndicates. Ace even gets rejected by local papers, a sign of true genius!

Vaughn Bodé collectors may contact Barbara Bodé at POB 10143, North Berkeley, CA 94709.

Donations may be made to the Comic Book Legal Defense Fund at POB 501, Princeton, WI 54968.

EL VIBORA 130 is \$8 pp from J. M. Berengueuer, Plaza Beatas 3, Barcelona, Spain.

I see Rick Geary is illustrating one of my old faves, Henry George Wells' *THE INVISIBLE MAN* for First's Classics Illustrated #20. I'm really enjoying this new series, particularly since the printing and binding are so much better than the original series. The source of many a high school book report, they were.



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If you're at a party of outsiders, never tell anyone you are a writer or a cartoonist. Say you're a systems analyst or a synergistics coordinator or a programmer then if your interrogator persists you can make up some outrageous bullshit which will at least entertain your own mind if it doesn't crack up your listeners. If you say you write, well *what do you write?* leads to a dead end or a long tedious lecture and you wind up listening to someone talk about how they always wanted to write a book, blah! blah! I always feel sorry for writers when I see them in social situations, because that is not their thing. Well, it is for some but certainly not the majority. Writing and cartooning are solitary pursuits and those who produce the most probably talk the least. I have been hearing *what do you write?* all my creative life and I have no idea what the answer is. Other writers and cartoonists never ask. It's like *where do you get your ideas?* Only a clod thinks there is an answer to that question. I am often tossed into the popular culture bag. Does that mean I never write about unpopular culture? This is all academic here, folks, because there are real people who write about what is really going on and there are academic people who write about what they think might be going on for other people who are writing the same sort of thing. Those in the academy write for one another, but I have always thought of myself as writing for everyone, the *populus*. There is always an *in* and an *out*. Starts at birth when you're in the family and you learn that other people are not in. At school, you find your group and you are in and others are out. If you join the military you learn that you are in and those fuckin' civilians are out. Go to college, you're a student and other people are *nonstudents*. I was at Cal Berkeley when the Free Speech Movement took place in 1964 and somehow the press figured students were too stupid to think so all the trouble had to be blamed on *non-student agitators*. Fact is, most of those who participated in the FSM were students in good standing at Cal.



90's
NOSTALGIA
NEWAVE
COMIX
RAP
BREAK-
DANCING
COMIC
RANDOM
DALLAS
THEME
PARKS
THIS IS THAT
THE MOVIE
DEMOCRACY



I see Judas Priest was exonerated after being put through a ridiculous trial charging them with triggering the suicides of a couple of teenaged guys. These are the days of miracle and wonder, aren't they? Hundreds of teenagers die on the highways every year because the liquor industry hustles them to drink and I have yet to hear about a single lawsuit against the liquor colossus! I suggest you parents get it together. Stop worrying about backward lyrics on some rock and roll records and focus your energy where it will do some good. It might surprise you, but most of the people I know never listen to their records and tapes backwards; in fact, the current college generation buys only CDs and there is no way I know of that one can listen to that music other than the way it was written.

While it is easy to dismiss a story as nonsense on the grounds that it is against all reason, it is often quite hard to prove that it is nonsense. And, even when the proof is forthcoming there will always be the credulous few who refuse to accept it.

Eric Ambler

THE INTERCOM CONSPIRACY, 1969.

In the Warhol fifties they were called *happenings* and the *Non-Event* was a localized Art Gallery phenomenon. Now the *Non-Event* has been institutionalized and exists internationally. The television news has assimilated Warhol and become abstract popcultism, a collage of random events, meaningless in themselves. They mean only because some program director has cut them in. I can't think of anything as absurd as a television news program. This week we have been watching the latest Middle East crisis unfold, and I'm trying to deal with watching our President, the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, fishing and playing golf while America is supposedly on the brink of a serious war. And the Vice President is down in South America! This is leadership? There is a local stand-up comic here in the Bay Area who does a great routine about a character he calls George Shrub along with some hard-hitting jabs at the CIA. His name is Dave Lippman, so check him out. The problem with political humor is the brevity of your career. Did anyone ever hear of Vaughn Meader after JFK was assassinated in 1963?

Sneakiest subliminal of the year. Remember Spielberg's little kid who is always staring into the light? Well, he was probably basking in the reflection of all that money, but I've seen a situational parallel in at least one ad this year--the little kid and the light being used to sell soap powder. I always love those ads anyway, because I never saw a little boy who cared anything at all about being clean. Little boys like to roll in the dirt and have mud fights and if you walk around the first grade classroom with clean clothes on you must be a wimp. Actually, the light we all stare into several times a day with that look of awe in our eyes is located in the refrigerator and that was probably Spielberg's inspiration. There may be an evil clown hiding in the darkness under the bed, but there is JELLY in the fridge! Eat on.

THE COLOR OF IT ALL

Ever notice that rebellion or dissent is usually colorless? Color is not considered serious in our culture. When I was a boy, my mother made me wear bland drab clothes. That was a time when t-shirts were called undershirts and they had nothing whatsoever to say. Today, a blank t-shirt would call attention, because every t-shirt advertises something even if it's only the wearer's enslavement to the product of some brewery. Mom never wanted my clothes to say anything. If I picked out a colorful shirt, I couldn't buy it because it was too loud. Most of the guys at my school wore the same boring uniform, jeans and a t-shirt and sometimes I think we must have had the same mother.

The uniform of American business is your basic boring dark suit. Ken Kesey said it was easy to disappear in America. When the FBI was searching for him, he just put on a blue suit and tie and went down to the financial district and vanished. Looked like everyone else there. Instant anonymity. Now a business man can wear a red tie to let the women [or other men] know that he can still get it up, but even colorful socks are suspect. You want to be taken seriously, never wear colors. This is only slightly less true for women as you can tell from watching L A LAW. Fashion became a serious issue when Haight-Ashbury exploded in wild colors in mid-'65. Freaks who were high on acid loved colors and black was only beautiful to black people who had their own revolutionary axe to grind.

Just before the dawn of hip came beat and the uniform of beat was basic black. Black sweaters and pants, black eyelashes and mascara and black shoes and black beards. Black, baby, like black. Walking up Grant Street in North Beach you saw blonde women in uniform sipping red wine as they sat in the windows of coffeehouses watching the squares walk by. The squares often wore colors--blazing fucking Hawaiian sport shirts! How totally unhip. A few years down the road those same women would be digging around in second hand stores on Haight Street, getting out clothes their grandmothers might have worn, because it was suddenly unhip to wear black. It was now hip to have an image that distinguished you from others. Mourning over the atomic bombings and the death of civilization had come to an end and it was now time to wake up to the dawning of the age of Aquarius. Drop a few mikes and let those follicles grow, baby. Get high and trip and make the scene. Freaks wore clothes that made the Hawaiian drag of the squares look funeral. You could always tell the heads from the political activists, because the activists were still in the conservative fashion bag, even those who were aping the military style of Fidel Castro who had kicked the fascists out of Cuba in 1959. I watched the styles change along Haight Street. It was kaleidoscopic. The Beats changed along with everyone else. Allen Ginsberg was everybody's guru. I saw him for the first time when I was a sailor. He was standing on an orange crate in front of a Greek market on upper Grant Street reading his poem *America*. He was young and thin

and bearded then, the poet laureate of hip. We saw him everywhere. Shortly after trip to India, He read his poetry in Pauley Ballroom at Cal one evening and he chanted a mantra that went on forever. Someone got into a beef with the cops in front of the Peace Eye in the Village in New York and Allen made peace by chanting a dispersal mantra right there on the sidewalk. Someone did a giant photo poster of him and half the people I knew from State college had it on their wall along with Marlon Brando or Mae West and half a dozen Fillmore or Avalon band posters. Allen came down to Fresno in 1967 when poet Robert Mezey was getting railroaded out of his job for opposing the war in Viet Nam and being a basic hippy. His presence attracted the local straight media and when one tv reporter stuck a microphone in his face and asked him what his philosophy was, Allen played his harmonium and chanted a mantra and the media made him look like a fool on the six o'clock "news." 'Twas ever thus, as Mr. Natural would say. This clod wanted the poet to sum up his entire lifestyle in a neat little sound bite appropriate for the valley audience.

Many sixties people threw out the black and it's always hard to deal with the black, because it is not really a color at all, rather an absence of color, yet it is associated with a race of people who have always had to deal with it, define it, defend it, deny it, extol it. The language of hip came from black culture. Black and white mingled in the art colonies of America long before there were very many integrated neighborhoods. It was jazz and poetry in the late fifties and people smoked grass and laughed at Mort Sahl and Shelley Berman and when you went to the john at City Lights you saw BIRD LIVES! on all the walls and wondered what the fuck does that mean because it would be years before you really got into the music of Charley Parker and realized that he died in 1955 and the graffiti made him immortal. Parker was on the road and he ran over a chicken and stopped and said to someone to go back and get that bird and the band stopped later and ate that chicken and from then on he was Bird and that bird lived on the walls in the johns of bars in New York and Chicago and San Francisco and Oakland and who knows how many other cities.

Beat was lived out in dark coffeehouses in the wake of existentialism, an attitude imported from Europe after the second world war by writers like Norman Mailer, but hip burst into the open, into the streets and parks. I don't want to run on about any of these philosophical poses. I know what people were reading at the time, a mixture of Zen Buddhism, Huxley, C. Wright Mills, Bertrand Russell, and various writers whose names slip my mind. Those were the post-McCarthy days of massive conformity and don't rock the boat and the lonely crowd and Middletown and the organizational man. In the Haight it was suddenly fantasy land. Everyone was reading Heinlein's A STRANGER IN A STRANGE LAND and Tolkien's HOBBIT and RING trilogy and if you didn't read these books even the graffiti meant nothing to you. FRODO LIVES. Strike a bell? Every line of bob dylan's latest song was memorized and analyzed. Ditto the Beatles. White folk singers became

prophets and the old religions bit the dust as parents went mad trying to stop their children from joining communes and cults. What parent could deal with it? Bald-headed kids in orange saffron robes living on rice and curry in temples and chanting Hare Krishna day and night. Something's happening here and you don't know what it is, do you, Mr. Jones. Number nine. Number nine. Any lamebrained Liverpudlian could twaddle the American teenage psyche. All that expanded consciousness. Where is it today? What happened to all that enlightenment? How did bob dylan wind up with so much money and so little left to say?

Ah, well, the black is back and the new kids on the block think it's brand new. The haircuts are back, too. The crewcut from the fifties is now worn by black rappers and if a white kid gets one of those haircuts instead of a spike he's imitating the bloods. Color had to be rejected again. I knew it would have to happen, because color is too revolutionary, too Third World. You look at Carnaval and Mardi Gras and neo-African bands like Kotoja and Zulu Spear and you see a blaze of color that glazes over the dull blues and grays of corporate America. the color says too much. Why wouldn't Joseph's coat of many colors strike fear in the hearts of a tribe that hid the sinful flesh under black robes? I remember Melville calling white the *colorless all-color of atheism*, and we know white contains all the colors of the spectrum as a prism will show you in a moment. Hey, the woman who shows up at a party in a red dress is out to get laid. Remember that one? Pink for boys and blue for girls, huh? Ooops.

The most colorful people I ever saw were the drag queens who performed as The Cockettes in those Saturday midnight Nocturnal Dream Shows at the Palace in North Beach in San Francisco in the early seventies. Hibiscus and Wally were the champs. Hibiscus is dead and I don't know what happened to Wally, but when the two of them were competing onstage it was better than Mae West versus Sophie Tucker. Wally once made up his face in red white and blue like a flag. He was going to be the Red Queen from Through the Looking Glass and he designed an enormous pair of tits. Inside he put an alternator and some flashlight batteries so that one tit lit up red then the other one followed. For a Christmas show he turned himself into a Christmas tree complete with a string of colored lights. It was the color that blew everyone away. I never saw any of the queens wear black. Divine wore a black evening gown in one of the later Cockette shows, but it was for a specific role.

Then one day black was back and it was punk and slam dancing and barfing into the audience and hostile vibes and hip had vanished like an Indian smoke signal in the sky above Golden Gate Park. Ginsberg's Angel-headed hipsters had become dark-eyed junkies prowling the night in search of a fix. Darkness at the break of noon eclipses both the sun and moon to understand you know too soon there is no sense in trying. Sunshine came softly through my window today. Come on people, now smile on your brother, everybody get together and love one another right now. Lines of poetry and songs dwindling away in my brain like memories of young girls in minidresses

stringing beads in the doorways of Haight and Cole and Stanyan and Buchanan and Clayton and Ashbury as Jimi Hendrix burned another guitar in Monterey and Pigpen kept on playing Midnight Hour for over an hour in front of all that melting color at the old Fillmore on Geary Street.

Suddenly the sons and daughters were hostile and hippies were vicious and bands had names you couldn't say in polite company. That which had been latent was now manifest. Goodbye symbolism. Hey, Mom, heard the new album by the Butthole Surfers? All those things that happened in the sixties that were taboo on tv were now the subjects of talk shows and sitcoms. Free love had become fear of love in a post-AIDS world. The defoliated jungles of Viet Nam faded into the burning sands of Saudi Arabia in the wake of the Cold War. *Whaddaya mean we're in a serious depression? I didn't see anything about it on tv.* That which was fiction is now nonfiction and nonfiction is now fiction. The unspeakable act is now routine on MTV. I saw the members of 2 Live Crew rap about cocksucking on Phil Donahue's talk show on October 25, 1990 and older people ts-ktsked while younger people right-onned and I remembered Elvis on Ed Sullivan shown only from the waist up as he sang lest the sensibilities of the tender be affronted by The King's shaking moneymaker. Tame when compared to his Satanic Majesty Mick Jagger in his skintight velour pants. *Let's spend the night together became Let's spend some time together on the sensitive airwaves.*

The sixties gave birth to mega-exhibitionism. Frank Zappa taught kids how to talk back to their parents and The Beatles and Stones taught his kids how to talk back to him. Alice Cooper hanged himself onstage over and over and Iggy Pop barfed up punk rock on a concert stage. Music was lost in the noise and spectacle. Back in 1961 I went to the Geary Theater in San Francisco with my second wife, Shirley, and we went to our seats. Everyone was dressed up. I wore a tie and jacket. The lights went down. Johnny Mathis walked onstage and sang some of his songs. We applauded and went out to the lobby for intermission, then returned to our seats. Johnny came out for his second act, sang the rest of his repertoire and a couple of encores. We all applauded and went out to David's for something to eat. Compare this with a Madonna concert today. Mathis didn't have to bump and grind in his underwear to get our attention. If he hadn't already had it, we wouldn't be at his concert. Today's performer is lost in the pyrotechnics just as today's actor is nothing but a secondary adjunct to special effects. Today's audience is confronted with a monster wall of amplifiers and even though most singers scream out their meaningless lyrics the human voice is lost in the cacaphony of synthesized sound. The aggressive jungle beat of rap has wiped out the melodic past. Marshall McLuhan's theories have proven to be correct. The medium is the message and music is no longer an extension of the human psyche. 2 Live Crew is about sex, not music. Man has become an extension of his own technology.

-CLAY GEERDES

COMIX PLUGOLA

The latest minicomix from Jason Lutes are NEAR FICTION [75¢ pp], MUSTAFA [50¢ pp], Highbrow/Lowbrow [\$1.45 pp], and an untitled mini with a red cover [\$1.50 pp]. The red mini is one of the most creative ideas I've seen this year. Buy one. Box 979, 2 College St., Providence, RI 02901. -C.G.

VOID #1 is \$1.50 from 5909 Alder St., Pittsburgh, PA 15232. This music zine contains some Crumb reprints.

PROPAGANDA WAR 3, 25¢/stamp.
Clark Dissmeyer
2313 Central #7
Kearney, NE 68847

It's still an unusual experience to read a Freak Brothers comic in color, but that's what you get in the 11th issue. \$2.50 at your local dealer. Art by Gilbert Shelton, who created the Freak Brothers in 1968, the late Dave Sheridan, and Paul Mavrides.

Look for a Canadian comic called DRAWN AND QUARTERLY. Four issues to date. Large mag format. I enjoyed the autobiographical pages of Joe Matt in #4. Chester Brown of YUMMY FUR did the cover. Brown's latest is YUMMY 23 in which he details his historical struggle with PLAYBOY. The airbrushed women in that mag never really did it for me. I confess to buying the early issues and stashing them with my favorite comics in a trunk someone ripped off from my house when I was away in the Navy, but the Playmates were never real enough for me. I always had my sex fantasies about real women, usually those I knew however slightly, so it was interesting to read about someone who whacked off over centerfolds. I guess I always considered those women a bit dumb, too. They bought the Hefner hustle and not a one of them has yet become a major movie or television star. You see them once in awhile as walk-ons in teen exploitation movies, but Playboy has no track into model or casting agencies. The company stock is so low, I am surprised the magazine is still on sale at all.

Guy Colwell will continue his DOLL story with a fifth issue. From Rip Off Press in March of 1991.

TERRORESS 1 is \$3 pp from Tom Roberts, 333 S. East Ave., #209, Oak Park, IL 60302. Standard comic book about a woman assassin. Psychologically improbable, but so was Valerie Solanis and SCUM [Society for Cutting Up Men]. Valerie shot Andy Warhol in an elevator in New York before most of you were born.

1991's Wonder Con is set for Oakland Convention Center, April 26-28. For info, send an SASE to Bryan Uhlenbrock, c/o Capital City Distribution, 720 Whitney St., San Leandro, CA 94577.

CLAY GEERDES' COMIX WAVE 102 © 1991. P. O. Box 7094, Berkeley, CA 94707. World Rights Reserved. Artwork and quoted material herein © the artists concerned. Used here for promotional purposes only. \$9 for the next twelve issues. Set of back issues \$40 postpaid.

Nan Wood Graham was the model for the tight-lipped woman in Grant Wood's painting American Gothic. She died in Menlo Park, California, Dec 14, 1990, at the age of 91.

Con-Fusion will take place in San Diego Feb 16-18. Information from Mark Stadler, POB 948374, La Jolla, CA 92037. 619-544-9555.

Pop art was the ultimate justification of the capitalist vision, that everything is a product and everyone is a potential customer.

THE FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF WONDER WOMAN

I'm sure most of you older readers remember comic book jungle and space heroines like Sheena, Tigra, Dale Arden, and Mysta of the Moon with a great deal of affection, but Wonder Woman has outlasted all of them. She's fifty years old in 1991! When I was eight, Wonder Woman showed up in the eighth issue of ALL STAR COMICS in a star-spangled skirt! I didn't have any problem with a woman fighting crime. After all, Little Orphan Annie had been socking crooks in the funny papers since 1924 and by 1941 most of the regular funny books had women in skimpy little uniforms battling against the remnants of the mob, so why not Wonder Woman? She was designed to get the little girl reader, but that was a joke. If girls read comic books at all, they read Little Lulu or love comics. Superheroes and detectives were for boys, not girls. Any knucklehead knew that.

Wonder Woman was born full grown from the head of a New York psychologist named William Moulton Marsten, who signed his stories Charles Moulton. A demi-goddess, she grew up on Paradise Island, the daughter of Queen Hippolyta. She was named Diana After the huntress in mythology. If she had a father, little was said about him. Parthenogenesis was not uncommon in the comics during a period of time when children were told very little about sex. Diana might have remained on Paradise island, blissfully unaware of the male gender had it not been for the outbreak of the Second World War. That war brought American planes flying near the island; one of those planes crashed and the pilot, Steve Trevor, put an end to Diana's dreams of eternal celibacy. She saved him from drowning and when he was well enough to return to the war, she went along, not the first goddess to fall in love with a human. In later stories, she appears in the role of his secretary, disguised as Diana Prince, a role suspiciously analogous to that of Lois Lane in the Superman strip closely imitated by Marsten.

During the war, Diana joined the rest of the comic book superhero pantheon in the fight against the Nazis and the Japanese, and when the war ended she returned to confront the same cast of weird pulp villains and strange creatures fought in other comic books by the likes of Batman, The Flash, Aquaman, Green Lantern, The Human Torch, and the Blue Beetle.

In the first Wonder Woman story, Diana appeared in a skirt, but the editors decided this would be a bit risqué, and subsequent stories found her in snug fitting tights. Though modelled on Hedy Lamarr, a screen sexpot since her nude running scene in ECSTASY, Wonder Woman was less sexy than her rivals, crime fighting femmes like Miss America, Miss Patriot, Phantom Lady and Miss Fury. This was due partially to the



sledgehammer drawing style of Harry G. Peter [his real name] who illustrated the Wonder Woman stories during the forties in both SENSATION COMICS and WONDER WOMAN quarterly, but Diana just didn't come on like a sex queen the way Phantom Lady did. She was too busy acting to pose. Diana Prince was always doing something, be it lassoing crooks with her magic golden lasso, flying around in her invisible plane, or chatting via her mental radio with her mom back on Paradise Island. She never lingered on panel in her underwear the way Matt Baker's Phantom Lady did. Di was too busy bouncing bullets off her magic bracelets.

Cheesecake in comic books a la Fox's BLUE BEETLE and PHANTOM LADY took a beating when women's liberation and feminism rose to the front in the late sixties and early 1970s, and while Phantom Lady did not make the cover of Ms. Magazine, Wonder Woman did. She was run on the cover of the second issue in 1973. I was surprised to see Diana adopted by the feminists; after all, she was simply Superman in drag, a ruse to attract the noncomicbook reading girls; what was feminist about that? Diana was a tough cookie who fought crooks and won, who rescued Steve and carried him around the same way Superman did Lois Lane. Lois fell out of open windows with more regularity than the SUPERMAN comic books made it to my neighborhood drugstore. Sheena's Bob and Diana's Steve were the big babies in the strip, carted about by their superheroine mommies and the consciousness of these pseudo-women characters was male, never female. The guys who read the comics were interested in the way women looked. They didn't care what they thought. Even when Wonder Woman was modernized by DC Comics in the early seventies, she was given a male Asian martial arts expert for her guru. The idea that a woman could function on

her own was alien to the heart of every male comic book artist. If cartoonists started drawing practical utilitarian uniforms on superheroines instead of crotchslit leotards and bathing suits, what would happen to sales? Think those young boys out there care if those space queens catch cold? Nope. Wonder Woman in street dress did not work for the predominantly male fans and it was not long before she was back in her star-spangled costume.

Now, we can rationalize her age by noting that she is practically immortal--after all her mother is a goddess, huh?--but chronologically, she would be in her seventies. I suspect the guys at MAD would have a good time with that. They might have Diana rocking on the porch of the Old Comic Characters Rest Home while Steve watched the Super Bowl game and gossiped about the good old days when he and Di were fighting spies.

Marston and Peters were good fantasists. Today's Wonder Woman is more realistic in some ways, but a lot further from her origin in others. Today she is sexy, flies around like Superman, and kills people. I don't know about you, but I always liked her invisible airplane. I remember the time Mad parodist Bill Elder had someone run into the plane and smash it into a pile of glass. What good did it do to have an invisible plane if the people who rode in it were still visible? The enemy had only to glance up and see these seated bodies moving through the air. But, then I loved that kind of absurdity.

The bondage, always a part of Woman Woman's trip, was all in fun, too. It had no sexual connotations for the preadolescent boy in 1941. Someone was always tying Diane up like Stanten's SWEET GWENDOLYN, or she was tying someone else up with her magic lasso to make them confess. If you were tied up with that lasso, you were compelled by its inherent magic to tell the truth. Kinky, if you enjoy being tied up for sexual stimulation, but just a lot of fun if you don't. Remember, this was a time when bondage was a part of most adventure movies whether they took place in Western or urban settings. Gene Autry or Boston Blackie were just as likely to get tied up as Wonder Woman. The audience for those B movies was no more sophisticated psychologically than the average Wonder Woman reader who, I am sure, would be surprised to hear that bondage and discipline have anything to do with abnormal sexual practices. I suspect the whole thing was a carefully calculated plot to increase the sales of clothesline rope.

Lynda Carter breathed new life into Wonder Woman in December of 1976, but the character was first televised in a tv movie in 1974 with Cathy Lee Crosby. Lynda Carter played the classic Wonder Woman, foe of the Nazis, but when the series

moved to CBS in the Fall of 1977, it was updated to the present time. Steve Trevor, a mere human would have been an old man, so he was replaced by his son, Steve Trevor, Jr., though both were played by Lyle Waggoner. In the original forties version, a big deal was made of Diana's speed and agility, her athletic prowess; this was retained in the tv series, but instead of removing her WAVE uniform to change to Wonder Woman, Diana Prince spun around while the chorus sang her name.

It is questionable that Wonder Woman would have survived without the renewed interest generated by the tv series. After the second World War ended in 1945, television, which had been shown at various fairs since 1928, was finally developed for mass consumption and it quickly replaced radio and movies as the predominant medium for pop entertainment. Television has been blamed by many as a major cause for the decline in comic book readership during the fifties. The children of these first tv viewers, however, returned to the comics in the sixties, and the medium survived and became a force to be reckoned with. By the late sixties, there were numerous cross influences within the media. Cartoonists sat and watched television as they drew and the ideas from one medium were recycled through another. By the seventies this became a standard routine. There had been comic books designed as movie tie-ins back in the fifties, just as there had been advertising giveaways designed to associate products with characters very early in the history of this country, but it all became big business with STAR WARS in 1975 and it was the STAR WARS trilogy that made it clear to movie makers that the time was ripe for the realization on film of the greatest adventures of the best known and loved comic book characters. By the eighties, SUPERMAN, SUPERGIRL, SHEENA, BATMAN, and numerous others were dominating the mall cineplexes and comic book companies were almost as numerous as they had been at the peak of the medium in 1944. Just as the image of Hedy Lamarr had influenced Harry Peter's rendition of Wonder Woman in 1941, so did the image of Lynda Carter influence the artists who took over the character in the late seventies and revived her for another round. Today's Wonder Woman has a sexual aspect that forties Wonder Woman lacked; Now what this might suggest on one level is that the current readership is older and more sexually aware, but millions of comic books were read by service men during the big war and all of these men were past puberty, so a more logical conclusion is that the overt sexuality of the underground and alternative comix of the late sixties and early seventies left their mark on those budding artists who wound up in the bullpens of the present drawing

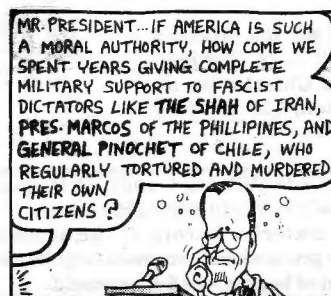
and inking characters like Dazzler and Wonder Woman. Batman was even allowed to father a child in SON OF THE DEMON, something that would have been unheard of in 1939 when that character evolved out of Mary Roberts Rinehart's THE BAT and Gibson's THE SHADOW.

Wonder Woman survived because she was an original and all of the imitations like Phantom Lady, Blonde Phantom, Miss America, Miss Fury, Miss Patriot, Sweet Gwendolyn, Torchy and the countless other cheesecake heroines of the Golden Age of comics hung up their uniforms and retired to that Rest Home for Old Comic Characters. Ultimately, Diana Prince, Wonder Woman proved herself the immortal William Moulton Marsten said she was.



© Roger Brand '73
-with apologies to the memory of JACK COLE-

TWISTED IMAGE by Ace Backwards ©1990



This year's San Diego Con is scheduled for July 4-9, 1991. Info from POB 128458, San Diego, CA 92112.



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COMIX PLUGOLA

Jason Lutes has NEAR FICTION 2 [75¢ pp], Box 979, 2 College St., Providence, RI 02901.

Dan Florian has some ug comix for sale. Send an SASE and want list to him at 2216 49th St NE, Canton, OH 44705.

CEREBUS 141 continues the Melmoth short story. Available at your local dealer.

TWISTED IMAGE 25 is \$1 pp from Ace Backwards, 1630 University Ave., Apt. 26, Berkeley, CA 94703.

Times change. 150 years ago, the United Methodist Church of Kernersville, North Carolina elected a Pointer and a Beaner. The Pointer's duty was to call out the names of certain folks in the audience who were to pay particular attention to some point made in the sermon. The Beaner's job was to sit in the choir loft with a bean shooter and watch out for anyone who dosed off. The sleeper was then awakened with a well aimed bean.

HIPSPLOTTATION?

Robert Gluckson is teaching a course through the Experimental College at the University of Washington called WHAT HAPPENED TO THE HIPPIES? I can answer that question. Nothing happened to us. We're still here, minus a few who died along the way. We're a bit shorter of hair and broader of tummy, but that's what aging does to you. Hey, lifetime hippy-cum-clown-cum-politico Wavy Gravy ran for office in the last Berkeley election. I still listen to the Dead, the Airplane, early dylan, Beatles, Stones, and read underground comix—not all the time, but probably more than the punk-cum-hip-hop generation.

Gluckson is doing a study of Tiajuana Bibles as a thesis and would like to hear from any of you who would be willing to answer his questionnaire. Drop him a note at the School of Communications DS-40, U of Washington, Seattle, WA 98195.

I've written about the TJBs as precursors to the minicomix we did in the eighties, but to answer Rob I never saw any of these comix as a kid. I saw them in reprint books in the sixties. The first time I saw one of the actual 8-pagers was at some underground artist's house and I don't remember who had it. The next time was when Monte Beauchamp found a stash of them and sent me one to look over. It's likely that those who saw the originals would be guys in their sixties and seventies now and I only have a few subscribers who fit into that category. Basically, the eight-pagers were sex comix in a time when erotica was hard to find. I doubt that they would stimulate the gonads of today's rock and rap audiences.

GOOD GIRL ART QUARTERLY for Fall of 1990 reprints a lot of Matt Baker's covers from PHANTOM LADY along with a couple of stories. PL was a hot sex comic I read and enjoyed as a teenager. It's almost as sexist and racist as the Six O'Clock News.

Robert Pasternak's ACID MAN 15 is \$1.50 pp from COMIX WAVE, Box 7094, Berkeley, CA 94707. 16 pp.

What happens to America's athletes? They sell products. I just saw Roger Staubach hustling designer garbage pails on TV's Home Show.

EL VIBORA 131 is \$8 pp from J. M. Berengueuer, Plaza Beatas 3, Barcelona, Spain. Gilbert Shelton did the cover.

HELLBLAZER is DCs cor temporary bid for the audience of V IS FOR VENDETTA and SWAMP THING. The hero of this series is John Constantine, a haunted figure surrounded by an aura of doom and guilt. As the title suggests, Constantine exists in two worlds. One is modern London and its environs presented in a noirish and Victorian setting and the other the domain of demons of the netherworld who he encounters in both locales.

Constantine deals with the denizens of both worlds (shades of Lovecraft!). Although existing for four years in this manner, as per the longevity of this comic title, he has sent many of his naive friends to their doom and thus has no constant companions or lovers. He has alienated acquaintances in London and bears the hatred of demons he has bested.

This metaphysical fugitive continues to draw the sympathy of readers by opposing villains we all love to hate: skinheads, environmental polluters, lynch mobs, etc. The writing is aimed at adults, heavily laden with psychosexual symbolism, wretchedness, and despair. Could this be DCs answer to the dark side of the Reagan-Bush-Thatcher era?

Exhibitionism is a form of social rebellion which is often misinterpreted. In the early 70's, it was suddenly fashionable among women office workers to wear the top two buttons of a blouse unfastened. Men usually interpreted this as a sexual invitation, but it was actually a form of rebellion against a previous office dress code under which women workers had to wear white blouses with high collars which were buttoned tightly under their chins.

Earlier, in the sixties, women threw out their girdles and panty girdles and some even stopped wearing bras and other items of lingerie. Men saw this as an invitation, too, but it was rebellion. These young women were sending a message to their mothers. Remember, it was always Mom who ordered the wearing of a training bra and it was certainly Mom who felt more comfortable knowing her daughter was on a date safely protected by a tight girdle. I'm sure Dads approved of these safeguards in the pre-pill days, but it was Mom who took daughter to the department store and bought them. My girl friend of 1953 used to take off her girdle and hang it on a bush while we had sex on a picnic table in Antelope Park.

In an overtly sexist culture like that of the contemporary United States where women are used to sell products, it is not surprising to find young men interpreting everything women do in sexual terms. The women are usually conforming to fashion or their own chosen image or simply personal comfort. Their comic book images, all created by men until very recently, have always been absurd. The male heroes all wear full uniforms to protect their bodies while they are fighting crime, yet the women heroines wear as little as the artist feels he can get away with putting on them. Look at Phantom Lady in the Matt Baker cover below. What is she, a damned fool? Nobody else would go out to fight crime



PHANTOM LADY No. 22

bare-legged. There is a good discussion of women in the golden age comics in William Savage's **COMIC BOOKS AND AMERICA: 1945-1954** [U of Oklahoma Press, 1990].

Fashion has always caused women a lot more misery than men. Look at something as punitive as a high heeled shoe. Who, but an idiot, would wear such a thing, and try to run or dance in it? Hey, I work at a club in Berkeley and I see women out there dancing in high heels all the time. In the sixties the fashion mongers sold women miniskirts and minidresses. These flimsy bits of cloth barely reached a woman's pubes, yet women had to wear

them because they were in fashion. For several years, women worked in offices and walked the streets in these clothes. Designed for skinny anorexic models, they were worn by heavy women who looked beyond ridiculous in them. Men, of course, assumed that the women would not have worn these peekaboo clothes if they did not want men to peek. The fifties skirts and dresses were long, well below the knee, and it was common to see a woman sit down and make sure her skirt was modestly covering her knee. How absurd to watch a woman make this futile gesture with the hem of a miniskirt. We are not talking about hookers here. The women who fall into the fashion trap are regular folks who work nine to fives and have kids, but the miniskirts got them into more trouble than any previous fashion. Hip women seldom wore them. Entertainers and hookers wore them all the time. Hot pants were in for awhile in the mid-sixties. These skin tight pants became standard uniform for hookers in New York and Los Angeles and I suspect more than a few secretaries wore them to parties. Again, they wore them in rebellion against office dress codes that prohibited them. Since hookers and entertainers are glamorized on television daily, it is hardly surprising that these negative images enter the secretary psyche and become part of an ongoing fantasy life. We see such fantasies manifested at public events like Hallowe'en and New Year's parties.

Do not go out into the world and read only newspapers and magazines and watch the unbelievably impoverished and hypnotic junk that is on television. Do not get your fiction and myth from movies and your philosophy and poetry from magazines. It is not only because I write books that I want you to read them. But because I don't want to live in a world where most of the people I pass on the street haven't had anything to think about all week but headlines in newspapers and the stuff that passes for entertainment on television. I have worked for television and magazines. I know how frightened and scattered the people are who make the stuff you are being bored and confused and brainwashed by.

-Ellen Gilchrist

In a failing marriage the matrons of Bel Air and Beverly Hills have one fundamental axiom: to spend is to save. On the day of marital judgment the wife is called in front of the judge and asked what she has spent in the waning days of the marriage. That figure will determine the divorcee's maintenance until the final decree.

Lawrence Leamer
KING OF THE NIGHT:
THE STORY OF JOHNNY CARSON, 1989.



COMIX PLUGOLA

Randy Paske has a nice MISC Hallowe'en Special. \$2/stamp from him at 4841 Birch Lane, Gilbert, MN 55741-9631.

THE BEST OF FEVER PITCH is \$16.50 pp from Brad Foster, POB 166255, Irving, TX 75016. It's mostly reprints of Brad's own work. Adults Only.

There is a new line of funny sex comix out from Forbidden Fruit, POB 699, Maugansville, MD 21767. One is about PUNTELLA PRIMM, THE SEXY SUPERSPY. Puntella is a chubby woman who has the kind of adventures Sally The Sleuth used to have in SPICY DETECTIVE. Another title reprints John Workman's SINDY and FALLEN ANGELS strips. \$3.50 pp each. Age statement with order.



The legend of Betty Page continues in BETTY BEING BAD. Pix of Betty in the buff. This one was put together by John Workman and is \$4 pp from Eros Comix, POB 25070, Seattle, WA 98125-1970. If Betty is still alive somewhere in the hinterland, she must be amazed at all the attention her young body is getting on the puberty market these days. A fanzine, THE BETTY PAGES, seems to sell well at our local comic stores.

The latest from Rip Off Press is ANNIE SPRINKLE IN THE ADVENTURES OF MISS TIMES. \$2.50. And is this a new trend, pornstars in the comics? I see that Personality has done one about Tracy Lords.





©ZABEL.



SUBURBAN MOJO is 50¢/stamp from Matthew Guest, TCU PO Box 31747, Fort Worth, TX 76129.

Coulton Waugh's seminal historical critique of the earliest comic strips, **THE COMICS**, will be reissued by University of Mississippi Press. The book was first published in 1947 and while Waugh was a cartoonist and insider himself he has written fairly about his colleagues. Born in 1896, Waugh died in 1973. This new edition of his book is introduced by Thomas Inge.

The fact is that talent has no relationship to character, politics, or morality. There are gifted people who are monsters, charmers whose talents are excessively limited, but fortunately there are more than enough who combine the affirmative values of character and talent, thereby making life in the arts a joy.

—Dore Schary

Tough executives never ask employees to sit. An employee standing and asking for anything becomes a panhandler with hat in hand and holes in his socks. —Dore Schary

The fact is we are in an era of accentuated self-aggrandizement. Rock stars are covered in greater detail than Nobel Prize winners. Oscars, Emmys, Tonys, Obies, Grammys, Golden Globes are solicited by trade ads and ploys in favored columns. Bad taste in pursuit of glory awards is not only permissible, it is encouraged. Then the winners weep and thank everyone, beginning with their sister Kate and ending with the Almighty. —Dore Schary. **HEYDAY.**

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COMIX PLUGOLA

Fantagraphics has published a collection of Robert Crumb Postcards. There are 10 in the set. It sells locally at Comic Relief for \$4.95.

The Oakland **TRIBUNE** censored a number of **DOONESBURY** strips in January after the US started bombing Iraq. The editor said the strips were not printed because the "subject matter wasn't relevant to the fast-changing events surrounding the fighting in the Middle East." Since when do comic strips have to be relevant to contemporary reality?



Diamond Press has published a new title by Joe Zabel and Gary Dumm. **MODERN PULP**. The lead story, **STEALTH**, deals with a kind of mystical relationship between a woman and a tiger. The material in this comic is reprinted from **JANUARY MIDNIGHT**.

Dave Sim's story **MELMOTH** continues in **CEREBUS** 142. His **CEREBUS** reprint series is up to 50.

HARASSMENT BY CALENDAR

U. S. District Judge Howell Melton ruled that 30 pictures of nude and semi-nude women displayed at Jacksonville Shipyards, Inc. sexually harassed Lois Robinson, a female welder who brought the complaint in 1986. The pictures were mostly on tool supply company calendars. "A pre-existing atmosphere that deters women from entering or continuing in a profession or job is no less destructive to and offensive to workplace equality than a sign declaring *Men Only*," wrote Melton in his opinion.

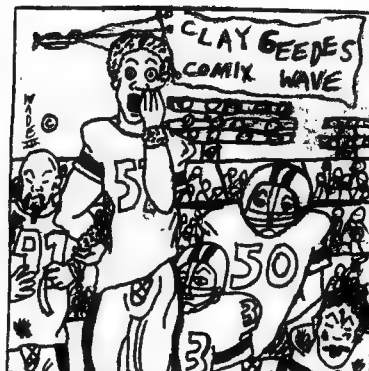
The kind of guys you used to see in crewcuts now have beards and long hair while the longhairs are now baldies and spikers.

Along Telegraph Avenue peace and war are selling well. There are t-shirts to represent all sides. A woman showed me a t-shirt that had peace on it in what she said were 86 languages. I didn't count them. A woman sitting at a table selling jewelry had a sign up that read: To Kill one person is murder, to kill a hundred thousand is foreign policy.

IAN FLEMING'S FANTASY BECOMES REALITY

According to plans and photos obtained by two German magazines, **BUNTE** and **QUICK**, the bathroom in Saddam Hussein's underground bunker is decorated with turquoise tiles and includes a toilet equipped with closed-circuit, self-disinfecting water supply meant to protect him from the public water supply if it should happen to be poisoned by radiation or chemical attack. The \$65 million dollar underground palace was built by a German company in 1981 and 1982. It sleeps 50 and lies 15 feet below ground. Built to withstand temperatures up to 572 degrees, the bunker includes chandeliers, wood-paneled walls, a television studio, and a swimming pool heated to 72 degrees.

Marc Fisher
The Washington Post.



COMIX PLUGOLA

Steve Willis says he will fill the gap left by the demise of CITY LIMITS GAZETTE. He promises a simple newsletter with plugs. First issue out this spring. POB 390, McCleary, WA 98557-0390. Steve writes that he will not be competing with my newsletter. To that, I say what's to compete FOR in this game, the right to give people free publicity and ego-boo? I'm not really in competition with anyone these days. I just do whatever it is that I do. Mike Gunderoy of FACTSHEET FIVE referred to CW as a personalzine. Aren't they all? I can't imagine what an impersonalazine would be like. Hey, I'm no more objective than the evening news and we all know what a lot of pro-war establishment propaganda that is. Every time someone tries to cram me into the Pop Culture bag, I have to suspect that if what I write about is popular culture then maybe they are writing about is unpopular culture.

Let me suggest to Steve that he not be so nice in his zine. To be nice is to be forgotten. Think on it. The most remembered person in Golden Age comics is Frederic Wertham who made a career out of attacking comics in print and lectures. He wrote a terrible book called SEDUCTION OF THE INNOCENT out of his lectures and scared a timid comics industry into publishing a peurile Code in 1954. Fred, a shrink by trade, knew how to score a place in history--attack.

I've often thought that I could have been a lot more helpful to the folks who drew and published underground comix back in the early seventies if I had attacked what they were doing instead of promoting it. When I read my early newsletters, I realize I was being a nice guy, trying to be friends with everyone. Think on it. If I had attacked the comix as immoral or communistic or some other buzzword, there might have been a controversy and someone might have been moved to talk about the comix in the Big Media causing thousands of them to be sold. Fred talked about stuff like PHANTOM LADY undermining the morals of youth and creating juvenile delinquency. I could have

As artists I believe our function is to express the feelings of the human race--to always speak the truth and never keep it hidden even though we are operating in a world which does not like the sound of the truth.
-Sinead O'Connor.

TEAM PLAYERISM

State and Pentagon have large press relations forces whose job it is to herd the press and shape the news. There are many ways to punish a reporter who gets out of line; if a big story breaks at 3 A.M., the press office may neglect to notify him while his rivals get the story. There are as many ways to flatter and take a reporter into camp--private off-the-record dinners with high officials, entertainment at the service clubs. Reporters tend to be absorbed by the bureaucracies they cover; they take on the habits, attitudes and even accents of the military or the diplomatic corps.

-L. F. STONE
The Haunted Fifties.

said that about ZAP COMIX or the FREAK BROTHERS. Jeez, guys, I could have been the great anti-comix crusader of the hippy era! I could have had hippies throwing joints at me on Haight Street! I could have held up RADICAL AMERICA on the Donahue show and said Look at this Commie rot, folks!

As it was, the Establishment simply lumped the underground comix with everything else weird that was happening in those acid days. They were declared a fad that was dead by the end of 1969 and those outside the comics community believe this just like they believe that sugar-coated cereals are really food and the current war has to do with the liberation of Kuwait.

In the seventies, there was as great a proliferation of comic ideas and titles as there was in the early forties when there were hundreds of studios and companies. I have well over a thousand titles in my own collection and there are collectors who have many more. Some of these were one-shots that went no further, but titles like ZAP and FREAK BROTHERS have a continuity from their inception to the present day which certifies that they are not and never were simply a fad. Underground comix broke the East Coast monopoly and in 1991 there is comix activity in San Francisco, Los Angeles, Seattle, Washington, and Wisconsin where there was none before the late sixties. Newave and minicomix of the late seventies and early eighties were a continuation and expansion of underground comix. Alternative, Ground-Level, or Black and White comics were made possible by the underground breakthrough.

Underground newspapers rose out of academic communities circa 1964-65 in reaction to the undeclared war in Viet Nam, and I suspect we will see their rebirth in the early nineties.

To be honest with you, I write what I feel like writing these days and I don't really give a damn what anyone thinks about it. I'm not writing for approval. I have my groupies and my intellectual opponents, but I don't particularly cater to one or the other. I'm just reacting to the mindrot around me. My COMIX WAVE persona might turn into Crusader Rabbit at times, but only because he would like to stimulate some lively comment.

...walking down Haight Street in San Francisco and saying hello to everybody. It was a rare moment for those of us who made music, being in this really happy environment full of really intelligent people who were all doing some heady stuff. -Country Joe McDonald

Rip Off Press is coming out with THE GIRL and THE MAGICAL NYMPHINI, both adults only sex comix. They will also publish Grass Green's HORNY COMICS AND STORIES #1.

Here's The Daily Californian publishing a front page story on February 5, 1991, about some swingers who appeared on the Donahue show. This is news? I wonder who got the Oprah assignment.

England has such a small show business community that if you don't become a part of it and join the Variety Club and do charity work, then you're looked upon as some kind of weirdo.

-Mick Jagger

Eric Shanower's THE BLUE WITCH OF OZ will be out this Spring.

Ace Backwards takes on the war in TWISTED IMAGE 26. \$1 from 1630 University Ave., #26, Berkeley, CA 94703.

El Vibora 132 is \$9 pp from J. M. Berengueuer, Plaza Beatas 3, Barcelona, Spain. Contains a Crumb reprint in Spanish.

Check out the show of MAD originals at the newly renovated Cartoon Art Museum in San Francisco, California. 665 Third Street. Sergio Aragones and Kelly Freas will conduct sessions for cartoonists. Call and ask about the hours. 415-546-3922.

HEY, NEETERS 7 is \$1.50 pp from Mike Sagara, POB 1378, Belmont, CA 94002.

FIGHT CENSORSHIP!

JohnCon III will happen in Baltimore, Maryland, kon April 6, 1991, and the guys at the Johns Hopkins University Comic Book Club will hold an auction to make some money for the Comic Book Legal Defense Fund. If you want to do your bit to nip censorship in the bud, you can donate something to this auction. Send a comic book or a piece of original art to Stephen Kent-Jusick at the club, Charles and 34th Streets, SAC Office, Baltimore, MD 21218-2693.

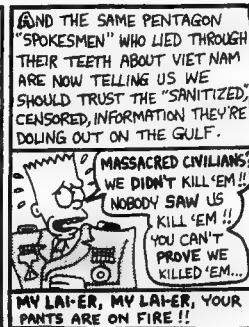
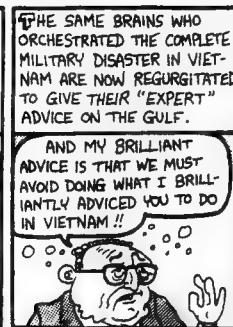
OY, RADCLIFFE!

Cliffies of Sasha's [Sasha Bruce] day divided themselves into three "flavors"; peach, chocolate, and lime. Peaches were clubby and social; they wore coats with fur collars, went with boys who smoked pipes, and majored in fine arts or English. Chocolates came from public high schools, wore large plaids, eyeglasses, and thick boots. The grinds of Radcliffe, they majored in science and math. Some joined Phillips Brooks House, the social service organization; others were simply obsessed with high grades, going on to graduate school and careers. The limes were the intellectuals, the arty ones who had already lived in foreign countries, hung Greek shoulder bags over their arms, and had pierced ears. They were loners who seldom made many friends.

-Joan Mellon

PRIVILEGE: The Enigma of Sasha Bruce, 1982.

TWISTED IMAGE by Ace Backwards ©1991





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WAR NEWS

Warren Hinckle has published the first issue of the **WAR NEWS**. The logo is by Robert Crumb and the first issue includes folks like Hunter S. Thompson, Dan O'Neill, S. Clay Wilson, Michael Moore, Paul Krassner, and Daniel Ellsberg. News about the Bush war that is not appearing on censored television or conglomerate-controlled newspapers and magazines. Available at Comic Relief in Berkeley.

Crumb's ID #2 came out in February of 1991. More sketchbook material with a new cover by Crumb. \$2.50 cover.

Hilary Barta did a nice adaptation of Aesop's *The Wolf at the Cottage* for Fantagraphics' **AESOP'S FABLES**. Some of the other artists included are Rick Geary, Val Semeiks, Randy Jones, Stanley Goldstein, Jay Rath, Shary Flenniken, and Fred Hembeck. \$2.50.

CLUB MELODY 1 is \$1 [cash only] from Sylvie Rancourt, Box 249, Delorimier St., Montreal, Canada H2H 2N6. French mini-comic.

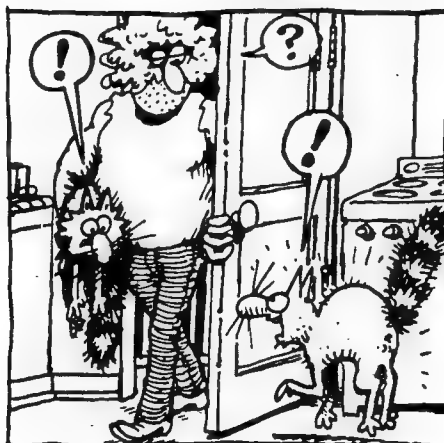
John MacLeod continues **THE MUNDANE ADVENTURES OF DISHMAN** in a tenth issue. 75¢ from him at POB 671, Guelph, Ontario, Canada N1H 6L3.

'TAINT FUNNY, McGEE

I just read an entire issue of the **National Lampoon** and I didn't laugh once! I thought it was interesting to find Bobby London still drawing **Dirty Duck** after twenty years. That was always a favorite of mine. I used to read it in the **Berkeley TRIBE**, a paper that spun off from the **Berkeley BARB**. London did all these little deadhead characters. The other day I heard a street hustler on Telegraph Avenue in Berkeley use the angle that he was a longtime deadhead and needed some money to get something to eat. Subsidized deadheadism in the nineties? I can't explain how the **Lampoon** lost me. I used to laugh at all the great stuff Chris Miller and the original crew did. **FIRST BLOW-JOB** was a classic. It became a vignette in **ANIMAL HOUSE**. What makes me laugh now? Larson's **FAR SIDE**. **PEANUTS**. Ace Backwards, who does what I consider one of the best contemporary strips, always breaks me up with his gags and the writing in **TWISTED IMAGE**. Ace pokes fun at everyone, even Jerry Garcia who might win the hairiest hippy award if it were not held by Ron Turner. There is a nice collection of Ace's stuff out in a quality paperback. I laugh at **SPY** though I think the formula is close to peaking. I loved the list of Stallone's lawsuits. Bruce Anderson is one of the funniest people alive and his **ANDERSON VALLEY ADVERTISER** is the only truly underground newspaper we have today. Every week Anderson reviews the media and not many reporters got good marks for their cowardly coverage of the Bush war. **IN THESE TIMES** is too pat for me but I confess to reading it along with those random issues of **THE REALIST** that make it to Moe's basement.

I've read all four issues of the new **Ms.** and have nothing but praise for the mag, but I've yet to laugh at anything therein. Serious and depressing stuff. The adventures of the women members of the **Ms. Foundation** would make a great sitcom, but they would have to produce it themselves because the networks are all good old boy enclaves and they like their beauty pageants as much as young boys like those Dave Steven's pin-up covers. A book of Dave's poster work is out.

THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE CURLEY is a new mini from Ken Greene, 753 Tamarack Avenue, San Carlos, CA 94070. 50¢/stamp.



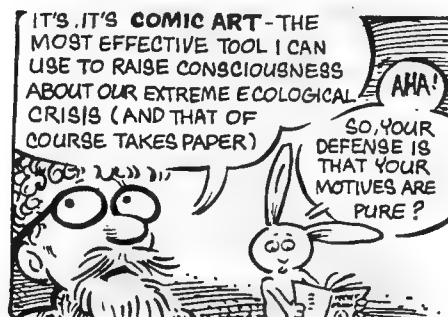
THE RETURN OF FAT FREDDY'S CAT

Back when he began to draw his **Freak Brothers** pages for the underground press in 1968, Gilbert Shelton was influenced by the layouts used by cartoonist like George Harriman and Bud Fisher. I've always thought Fisher's **Mutt** and **Jeff** influenced Gilbert more than he realized because he assimilated the same type of music hall routines into his strips that Fisher habitually used. Can't deny that The Three Stooges figured in his background as well as comic teams like the Marx Brothers. Harriman started **Krazy Kat** as a filler strip at the bottom of his **Sundays** and it was not long before the **Kat** took over the strip. Fisher's cat strip was **Cicero's Cat**, the immediate precursor to **Fat Freddy's Cat**. **Rip Off Press** has just issued the second collection of gags about the orange cat who is forever making life hectic for **Fat Freddy** and his two lifelong bachelor buddies. My favorite appeared years ago and it had to do with what the cat left in someone's headphones.

R. Diggs continues to be on the right side of many contemporary issues in **THE GREATEST DIGGS OF ALL TIME**. Ecology figures in this one as well as safe sex.

The 29th issue of **RIP OFF COMICS** has a cover and a nice editorial by Paul Mavrides. Paul says that "comics will be the only form of culture allowed us by our fascist corporate masters in the near future," and he could be right. There are a lot of good comic stories and gags in **RIP OFF COMICS** and far too many artists to list here. Get a copy. If you can't find these comix at your local minimart, you can order directly from **Rip Off Press**, POB 4686, Auburn, CA 95604. Always include an age statement with your order. Megaviolence and tv war are perfectly okay in contemporary America, but any image likely to stimulate the gonads is adults only.

Paul Krassner was interviewed in the March, 1991, **FUNNY TIMES** [Sample \$2 from POB 18530, Cleveland Hts., Ohio 44118]. He is working on his autobiography and doing his stand-up comedy act. **THE REALIST** is still around. I see it from time to time in Moe's in Berkeley, but it doesn't appear to come out regularly. Paul's at Box 1230, Venice, CA 90294.



For the most part, writers are gentle and sensitive creatures, observers of a world that is, at least in part, alien. They long for some kind of acceptance and approval so desperately that they allow themselves to be used by the left and the right, casting aside the knowledge that we are a brotherhood and a sisterhood without which this bloody and senseless world would be a good deal less civilized than it is.

—Howard Fast, 1990

Joe Bob Briggs calls his newsletter **WE ARE THE WEIRD** and there is a lot of funny stuff therein. You can get a sample from him for \$1 and a 45¢ stamp, POB 2002, Dallas, TX 75221.

Jane Oliver's **TALES OF JERRY 9** will sell for \$2.50. Mail reaches Jane at 244 S. A St., Santa Rosa, Ca 95472. Jerry 9 has a cover by Dave Garcia.

I'm pleased to see that Ambrose Bierce's **DEVIL'S DICTIONARY** has been included in the new **CLASSICS ILLUSTRATED** series, but I would like to see source information for the biographical note on Bierce. I don't like to see commentary that leaves me hanging. "In his later years, Bierce grew bitter, a trait that began to mar his writing and tarnish his reputation," says the anonymous writer in the Gahan Wilson version of **DD**. Well, that's not true and if it were I would want to know why. Bierce was always bitter in his writing. It was part of his style and if he grew more bitter in his last years he had good reason. He lost his wife and his two sons committed suicide. My sources are **THE LITERARY HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES** and James Hart's **OXFORD COMPANION TO AMERICAN LITERATURE**. There are a number of lesser errors in the Classics bio, but I will leave these for you to look up for yourselves if interested. Carlos Fuentes' novel, **OLD GRINGO**, is based upon what might have happened to Bierce after he went to Mexico during the time of Pancho Villa. It's interesting speculation, but doubtful. The film made as a vehicle for Jane Fonda was even more doubtful. C.G.



ART MITCHELL DEAD

I was saddened by the death of Art Mitchell on February 27th. His brother Jim has been arrested and charged with murder, but the facts are still known only to Jim and the police at this writing. I knew the Mitchell brothers back in the days when I was a street reporter. The O'Farrell theater in San Francisco was one of the stops on my rounds. Art and Jim were good to me. They let me use their darkroom numerous times and I was always invited to their parties and screenings. The last time I saw Art he was sitting at the bar at the Chi Chi in North Beach. That was a couple of years ago at a **SPECTATOR** party. We passed the time of day. The Mitchells were into film at San Francisco State College in the late sixties and like many film students they started making erotic movies to help pay their expenses. They were successful in the business and **BEHIND THE GREEN DOOR** was a big hit. The O'Farrell Theater became a tourist attraction in San Francisco during the seventies and the Mitchells expanded it with a number of New York style sex shows.

On Tuesday nights the Mitchells used to show old movies and sell the tickets for a nickle. They did this so many of the people who had no money could have an evening of entertainment. These shows were always crowded as you might expect and the atmosphere was mellow. A lot of theater people and underground cartoonists often hung out. Some of the women who worked for the Mitchells in different capacities started doing parodies of the old movies and their live acts developed into a women's theater company known as The Nickettes. Before long they were doing their shows at Intersection in North Beach on the weekends. I knew all of these people and wrote articles about their shows and activities for the Los Angeles **FREE PRESS**, the **STAFF**, the Berkeley **BARB**, and for several magazines like **COAST** and **ADAM**. I saw my role in those days as that of a catalyst since I often linked people from one scene with those in another. I would get free comix from The Print Mint or Last Gasp or Rip Off Press, for example, and I would give copies to people like John Lion who directed the Magic Theater of Berkeley or Deborah Marinoff who wrote many of the scripts for the Nickette shows. When I put together the second underground comix con in Berkeley in 1976, I collaborated with Deborah and Denise Larson in working out a comic-oriented script which was presented at the con. This was the first and one of the only times where over and underground characters appeared in the same script. The Nicks did Blondie and had S. Clay Wilson's Ruby the Dyke dancing next to her. Bobbie from the Free Store made herself up as Crumb's Angelfood McSpade. At that time many of us still had that feeling of unity that grew out of the Haight-Ashbury experience. We felt like a tribe of entertainers, all part of the same show which we did at different times and in different places. Tuesday nights it would be at the O'Farrell and on the weekends it would be in Golden Gate Park as a Be-In or Love-In during the day then at the Fillmore, the Avalon, Intersection or in one of the larger hotels in San Francisco at night. Margo St. James'

COYOTE parties, the Hookers' Balls, were an outgrowth of the same experience. This was a period when there was a wonderful amalgamation of all the arts, when cartoonists, actors, musicians, sculptors, dancers, mimes, and politicians all banded together. To me, it felt like a party that lasted a decade, one closely analogous to the 1920s.

The Mitchell brothers were a part of it and with Artie's death one more link has dropped out of the chain. I expect what happened that Wednesday night was an accident, but we will only know when the facts come out at Jim's trial.

Cerebus 143 came out in February of 1991. Dave Sim continues the Melmoth story. **CEREBUS** 51 and 52 have been reprinted.

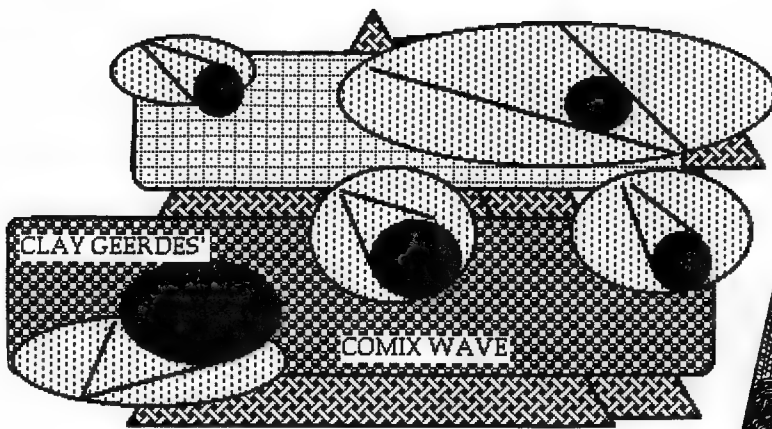
Analogue of the Month

I am a diagnostic radiologist who has worked in the field of mammography for over 10 years. I suggest that women think of their breasts as lumps of raisin bread dough. When the dough is in a big lump, one can see only the raisins on the surface, but if one takes a rolling pin and flattens out the dough, one is able to see every raisin. The cancers, of course, are the raisins. It helps to keep this analogy in mind.

—Bonna Rugers-Neufeld, M.D. to Ann Landers, February, 1991.

HEY, RUBE!

Purdue University just held it's 9th annual Rube Goldberg Contest. Rube was famous in his time for coming up with highly complex inventions designed to do the simplest possible things. Winners of the Purdue contest this year dubbed their entry The Toast Masters. They used the Statue of Liberty, the space shuttle and a mouse trap to trigger an electric train which inserted two slices of bread into a toaster. As the bread toasted, a mechanical rabbit hopped down a bunny trail followed by a replica of the Purdue Power Plant smokestack which fell into a bucket, raising the school's mascot, Purdue Pete, who flew up a pole and raised the American flag. A tank then turned around and triggered a switch to reverse the train which pulled the toast from the toaster. Goldberg would have liked this invention of the student chapter of the Society of Manufacturing Engineers, but in truth, it was way too simple. Rube would have added at least a dozen more steps to make it a good panel.



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Torchy Todd has returned. Bill Ward's naive heroine has joined the parade of yesterday's characters in a reprint series from Innovation. On the cover of the first issue is a painting by Olivia, but what puzzles me is the line *Not intended for children*. What?? I was reading Torchy stories in MODERN COMICS when I was eight years old. Along with Sheena and Matt Baker's Phantom Lady, Torchy was one of my faves. There is very little that is adult about the stories written around Torchy. From an enlightened point of view she comes across as a negative stereotype, the dumb young beauty forever doomed to be harassed and stared at by men old enough to be her grandfathers, but who looks at this kind of comic art as social realism? I never did. Bill Ward's exaggerated anatomy was always designed to over titillate the horny adolescent boys who came across his stories in various Quality Comics during World War II. Bill was into fancy lingerie and peekaboo shots. Torchy was always climbing a ladder the way Sheena was always climbing up a tree with Bob standing innocently below looking up at her buns.

The Torchy stories are funny. One of those in the first issue could have been the outline for Goldie Hawn's movie, FOUL PLAY, but Ward probably got the idea from a thirties movie, because the dumb blonde had become a cliché by the time of Ann Sothern and only peaked in the early sixties with the deaths of Marilyn Monroe and Jayne Mansfield. Today's blondes are seldom dumb on or off screen. Think of Kathleen Turner, Glenn Close, or Kim Basinger. No Torchys here.

The Torchy came from torch singer, a thirties synonym for a hot number. If you liked someone back then, you carried a torch for her. I'm sure today's younger reader will find the language used in TORCHY more than a little quaint.

Be nice to see some new Torchy stories. Maybe some What Ifs. What if Torchy had been a punk rock singer? Be fun to see Kim Basinger play her on screen. I've been a fan of hers since MY STEPMOTHER IS AN ALIEN.



More really psychotic stuff in the second issue of RAT FINK. Ric Sloane, Jeff Gaither, and John Garcia worked on the art. \$3.25 by mail from World of Fandom, 2525 W. Knollwood St. Tampa, FL 33614-4334.

Guy Colwell is continuing the story of DOLL. #5 is out. \$4 pp from Rip Off Press, POB 4686, Auburn, CA 95604. It's adults only so tell the Todds you're over 21.

Greg Irons used to tell me that art should stand on its own, but when you get to know the artist that never works. It does to a certain extent when you know nothing about the artist, but we don't live in that kind of situation. Hey, people like Crumb who claim to hate interviews are interviewed all over the place. I must have two dozen different interviews between Crumb and different people in my files. So there is Crumb and there is his art and now in the sixth volume of his collected works there is Crumb the gossip telling stories about his early sex life so we have Crumb the man and Crumb's art and Crumb's gossip about the women who inspired that art and there are still people who write and ask what kind of man is Robert Crumb anyway. Hell, I don't know. It's all make believe anyway. We invent ourselves from day to day and spend a lot of time defending our inventions. At 48, Crumb is talking more about what he was than what he is and being in the public eye makes him dwell on the evanescence of it all more than the rest of us who often get through whole months without being asked to justify anything more than the few pounds we have gained or lost.

Students of human unhappiness as different from one another as J. P. Morgan and Voltaire understood that the comfort of the rich requires an abundant supply of the poor. Without the goads and spurs of poverty, who would clean the toilets in California, or carry the golf clubs at Burning Tree, or enlist in President Bush's armies?

—Lewis Lapham, HARPER'S

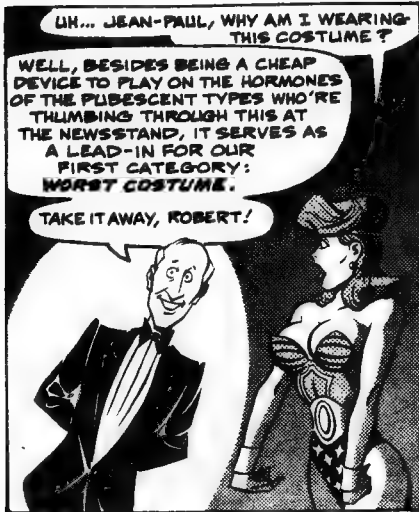
THE NAKED AND THE NUDE

I was really shocked to learn about the nude relays held secretly at the University of Florida campus in Gainesville on Easter Sunday of this year. On the other hand, now I know where all of the streakers have gone. Streaking was faddist for awhile in the pre-Yuppie seventies. Actually, it got to be almost obligatory. At a party held at the Great American Music Hall in San Francisco to celebrate the opening of the erotic film THE DEVIL IN MS. JONES, none other than networker Jerry Rubin and newwave cartoonist Roger May streaked the party. It was Robert Opel's steak of the Academy Awards that got the whole fad started. The Florida nude relays followed a post-game party held for the 48th annual Florida Relays. About 45 naked runners participated in the 2:30 a.m. race and the event came to an end when someone turned on the lights at the Percy Beard Track. Runners of both sexes ran a 1,600 meter relay and no one was busted.



I like the idea of THE WORLD'S WORST COMICS AWARDS, but.

I always have to put my two cents in, right? How come all of the AWARDS went to straight comics and none to undergrounds like OK and DIRTBALL and BAREFOOTZ, books published by the same company that ran the two WORST COMICS issues? Nothing in the underground or newwave that deserves honorable mention as dreadful stuff? Maybe Schumeister and Larsen will move on to some of the more deserving stuff in a future issue. I dunno, there's just something a bit ONE-SIDED when a company comes out with TWO comic books that are critical of the medium but only as that medium has been used by OTHER companies. C.G.



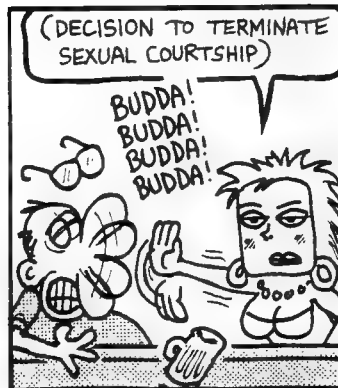
The Velvet Underground has a moment of peculiar triumph when it plays at the Delmonico Hotel for the annual dinner of the New York Society for Clinical Psychiatry. Dr. Robert Campbell, chairman of the dinner and director of the psychiatric unit at St. Vincent's Hospital, has invited Andy [Warhol] and the Underground to give some shock treatment to the 175 well-dressed shrinks and their perfumed, carefully coiffed wives. Over roast beef, the doctors are bombarded by the decibels of three fire engines and blinded by stun-gun lights. Gerard does his whip dance. Edie [Sedgwick] shakes her butt. Four Freudians and one Jungian walk out, needing first aid for their eyes and ears. One Fifth Avenue practitioner regurgitates his roast beef, and several analysts are heard making appointments with each other for the next day.

Ultra Violet
FAMOUS FOR FIFTEEN MINUTES.



I had two sex idols--Dick Tracy and Popeye. My mother caught me one day playing with myself and looking at a Popeye cartoon.

--Andy Warhol.



That's Jerry Garcia on the cover of BUZZARD 3 with all those weird cats. Steve Lafler's art is snappy in this issue, but the book contains a lot of really down stuff. Lots of negative imagery. \$3.50 by mail from Cat-Head Comics, POB 576, Hudson, MA 01749.

TWISTED IMAGE Newsletter
1630 University Ave., #26,
Berkeley, Ca., 94703
\$1 a month - \$12 a year

COMIX PLUGOLA

To keep up with the work of Clark Dissmeyer, send him an SASE at Box 1531, Kearney, Nebr. 68848. I loved the story of Luther Scum, Hardcore Atheist Detective, and Clark's Propaganda War drives another nail in the coffin of media prevarication.

JIM JAM is a buck from Jim Siergey, 4135 N. Hermitage, Chicago, IL 60613. Watch for Jim's CULTURAL JETLAG 1. It's a jam with Jim Ryan.

HEALTH 3 is \$2 from David Tompkins, 207 Avenue B, #2-A, NY, NY 10009. Some grossly funny stuff. Henry Miller is quoted on the back. Nice slick cover. These guys know a printer.

...the difference between now and the "underground press" of the sixties is that it is so cheap to publish a newsletter on a personal computer that you can actually get your ravings distributed and read without having an actual job.

--Joe Bob Briggs

[Joe Bob's contribution to our print junkie-ism is WE ARE THE WEIRD. Sample for a couple of bucks from POB 2002, Dallas, TX 75221.]

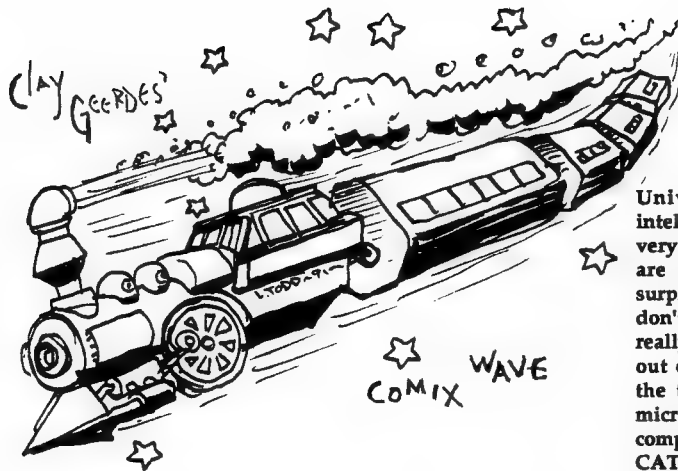
And speaking of DALLAS, after 16 years of the glorification of the Texas rich and their sinful lives, that prime time sitcom is going to the old video graveyard this May. How will it end--an invasion by Iraqi terrorists armed with Israeli uzis blowing up the Ewing building? Old J.R. castrated and stuffed and hung up as one more tourist attraction for the gore freaks who make their annual trek to the Kennedy shrine in Dealey Plaza?

Have I plugged Ace Backwards lately? I'm still waiting for Ace to write the definitive version of the People's Park war. LOOMPANICS UNLIMITED has published a collection of Ace's strips in a nice perfect bound edition. Just the gift for your parents on their next anniversary. It's \$15.95 pp from POB 1197, Port Townsend, WA 98368.

BAY CON '91 is coming up on May 24-27 at the Red Lion Inn in San Jose, Ca. Info from POB 70393, Sunnyvale, CA 94086.

I can't really define this damned thing. I just go on writing. My newsletter is kind of a public version of my scrapbook. I find all these weird things here and there and pass them along to further stir up the reader's imagination. It all started on an old Remington portable typewriter I bought at the Emporium on Market Street in San Francisco, an old blue workhorse that got me through hundreds of college papers and examinations. From there I went to an IBM selectric, then to an office standard, and, after a couple of years using a Canon Typetar 7, I learned to use a Macintosh and that's why your CW looks the way it does today. I'm still into platters and cassettes, and have not switched to CD's so I am out of phase with most of the college people I meet. I have Beta and VHS, but I tape less and watch less these days. I'm trying to get a few books formatted and will probably desktop publish them myself.





COMIX PLUGOLA

WHAT-NO VAGINA PARTY?

At UC this semester, you can vote for PENIS. If you were to stroll through Sprout Plaza this clear April afternoon, you would see a six foot phallic sign promoting the party platform. You'd even get a free condom. PENIS [Politically Educated Noninterested Students Party] wants to infiltrate the Associated Students and fulfill the true desires of the student body. Which are?

I had an interesting conversation with a five-year-old boy the other day at Ashkenaz. He was wearing a Ninja Turtle sweatshirt and I made the mistake of asking him which turtle he liked the best. Rafael. The boy was still karate-chopping folk dancers and telling everyone about the way the turtles wasted bad guys when his mother hauled him out the door. The moral: Never ask a kid about turtles.

EL VIBORA 134 is \$9 pp from J. M. Berengueuer, Plaza Beatas, 3, Barcelona, Spain. Adult sex material.

In the past, pure scientists took a snobbish view of business. They saw the pursuit of money as intellectually uninteresting, suited only to shopkeepers. And to do research for industry, even at the prestigious Bell or IBM labs, was only for those who couldn't get a university appointment. Thus the attitude of pure scientists was fundamentally critical toward the work of applied scientists, and to industry in general. Their long-standing antagonism kept university scientists free of contaminating industry ties, and whenever debate arose about technological matters, disinterested scientists were available to discuss the issues at the highest levels. But that is no longer true. There are very few molecular biologists and very few research institutions without commercial affiliations. The old days are gone. Genetic research continues, at a more furious pace than ever. But it is done in secret, and in haste, and for profit.

Michael Crichton
Jurassic Park, 1990

Micro comix live. The latest from Pocket Conspiracy Comics are THE JUST SAY NO TO TUNA BOOK and THE ENVIRONMENTALLY CORRECT BATHROOM. These little comix are the same dimensions as the old eight-pagers and they cost a quarter apiece. Send a first class stamp for up to three. Argus IG, Dept. 35, POB 44802, Indianapolis, IN 46244.

IMAGO 3 is available from Fimgent Press, POB 3566, Moscow, ID 83843-0477. \$5 pp. The mag uses some material. Query first.

REAL SCREAM COMICS 19 is \$2 pp from Mike Cupepper, 808 Stanley Street, Nelson, B. C. V1L 1N7.

Like the seal balancing the red, white, and blue ball on the end of its faithful nose, a servile press is a circus act, as loudly and laughingly cheered by a military dictatorship as by a democratic republic.

Lewis Lapham
Harper's, May, 1991.

Universities are no longer the intellectual centers of the country. The very idea is preposterous. Universities are the backwater. Don't look so surprised. I'm not saying anything you don't know. Since World War II, all the really important discoveries have come out of private laboratories. The laser, the transistor, the polio vaccine, the microchip, the hologram, the personal computer, magnetic resonance imaging, CAT scans—the list goes on and on. Universities simply aren't where it's happening any more. And they haven't been for forty years. If you want to do something important in computers or genetics, you don't go to the university. What must you go through to start a new project? How many grant applications, how many forms, how many approvals? The steering committee? The department chairman? The university resources committee? How do you get more work space if you need it? More assistants if you need them? How long does all that take? A brilliant man can't squander precious time with forms and committees. Life is too short, and DNA too long. You want to make your mark. If you want to get something done, stay out of universities.

Michael Crichton
JURASSIC PARK, 1990.

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For anything copyrighted after January 1, 1978, copyright protection lasts for the author's lifetime plus 50 years. Under the previous copyright laws, protection lasted from 26-47 years depending upon when it was filed. Works that were not reregistered are in the public domain and may be reprinted by anyone. This is why we are seeing a lot of comic material reprinted. Many Golden Age comic books are in the public domain since the companies dissolved and the copyrights were never renewed.

If you wish to copyright something you have created and want information, send your query to

The Copyright Office
Information and Publications Section
Library of Congress
Washington, DC 20559.
Forms may be ordered by phone from
1-202-287-9100

As a good primary source of recent copyright law, I recommend Daniel Sitarz' *The Desktop Publisher's Legal Handbook*, Nova Publishing Co., Carbondale, Illinois, 1989. A second good source is *The Writer's Lawyer: Essential Legal Advice for Writers and Editors in all Media*, by Ronald Goldfarb and Gail Ross. Random House, 1989. Goldfarb and Ross have a good discussion of the distinction between the work and the characters therein. Both books discuss libel, defamation of character, and invasion of privacy.

Clay Geerdes #300
ESSAYS: Volume One. Signed
First Edition.
© Copyright Clay Geerdes, 1991. All Rights Reserved.
Published in Berkeley, California,
April, 1991. Box 7094,
Berkeley, California 94707.

WONDER CON

I visited Wonder Con in April. Larry Todd told me that Cobalt 60 was going through film treatments and might finally make it to the screen. Larry Welz was present drawing pictures of Cherry Poptart. Ed Brubaker gave me a copy of LOWLIFE #1. Steve Lafter gave me a copy of Lloyd Dangle's DANGLE 1. \$3 from Cathead, POB 576. Hudson, MA 01749. Jane Oliver has TALES OF JERRY up to #9. She was sitting near a picture of Jim Morrison with vampire teeth. Her new address is 511 Grandview Rd., Sebastopol, CA 95472. \$3 for Jerry. Ron Turner gave me copies of HORNY BIKER SLUTS 2 and the latest of Hunt Emerson's FIRKIN THE CAT (4 and 5). Jim Valentino was sketching. He is working on GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY for Marvel and said he was thinking of moving East. Disney was handing out buttons and postcards promoting this Summer's release of THE ROCKETEER. Dave Stevens was mobbed all the time I saw him. Long lines of people wanting his signature on everything. People were putting on those idiot glasses to look at the 3-D Rocketeer just issued by Disney. Arn Saba has moved to Albany, California. I talked to Paul Mavrides about the latest Freak Brothers comic, #11. Bob Beerbohm said he was opening up an art gallery at the Cannery in San Francisco this coming May and will handle all the art of Rick Griffin as well as some of the early work of Shelton and Dave Sheridan. I saw a lot of totally ridiculous prices on comics [so what else is new?], mostly those early Ninja Turtles and they aren't even ten years old yet. Ah, well, you can put the price on and sit the comic out there, but that doesn't mean anyone is ever going to pay that price. I think this is nothing but collector vanity. I have a good memory and some of the books I see pasted up there have been there for years. The attempt to push golden age comics into a fad for the rich has a ways to go, but I fully suspect to read about something like ACTION 1 selling for a million dollars before I kick off. Most of the major painters never made a dime when they were alive, now their stuff is hanging in the homes of the rich. Aside from all the corporate greed, I had a nice time visiting with people. We are a weird community, we comics people. We see each other once or twice a year at these cons and most of the time we don't communicate. Half the people I talk to are people who have no time to answer their mail so I don't write to them and they don't write to me, but we all recognize that the comics brought us together. The lure was strong, that's for sure, because most of the guys who got into the trip fifteen or twenty years ago are still in it, most of them dealers and collectors. Same faces though framed in gray.

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How do you get attention in this crowded world? Well, if you're Karen Finley you might go onstage and smear chocolate all over your body. Finley has written a book called SHOCK TREATMENT. She thinks of herself as a performance artist. Hey, we're all performance artists. Anything you do in front of one or more people is a performance. Finley did her act at the University Art Museum in Berkeley in November and I wasn't there. I've yet to see her in person, but I love the idea of her. Anyone who trashes a corrupt old racist warmonger like Jesse Helms can't be all bad.

Dali holds forth on the rhinoceros's horn, reputedly the world's most powerful aphrodisiac. He says, stretching out each vowel, "There is not a day I don't thank Sigmund Freud for his great truths. Thanks for him, in all my paintings I manage to paint a rhinoceros horn. Even in my famous Bread, there is a rhinoceros horn resting in the basket. I have to give you some powdered horn some day.

Ultra Violet
FAMOUS FOR FIFTEEN MINUTES.

ESQUIRE, started in 1933, and now owned by the Hearst Corporation, is the latest men's mag to be infiltrated. The new publisher taking over in May is a lawyer named Nancy Nadler LeWinter who worked for VOGUE, GLAMOUR, and PENTHOUSE. I'll bet old Amie Gingrich is turning over in his grave. But, hey, a woman runs PLAYBOY, another one runs HIGH SOCIETY, and the deceased wife of Larry Flynt, Andrea, ran HUSTLER for several years. We may yet see the day when Ms. is run by a man.

COMIX PLUGOLA

CEREBUS 144 is out. The latest reprints are Nos. 53 and 54. The zipatone Aardvark meets Wolveroach.

Bill Shut and Jeff Gaither are responsible for the new issue of EXQUISITE CORPSE, available from Starhead Comics, POB 30044, Seattle, WA 98103. 50¢/stamp.

I wrote a children's story called THE SLEEPY LITTLE ENGINE for a little friend of mine who is into trains and Jim Siergey drew some illos for it. I have printed a few of them for collectors. \$2 pp from me. If you have a kid and would like it signed to him, please send along the name. C.G.

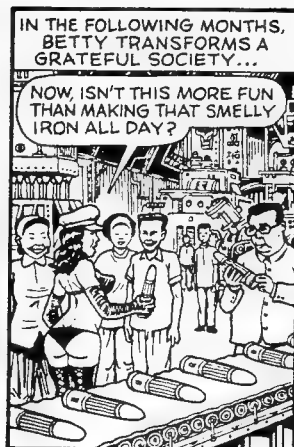
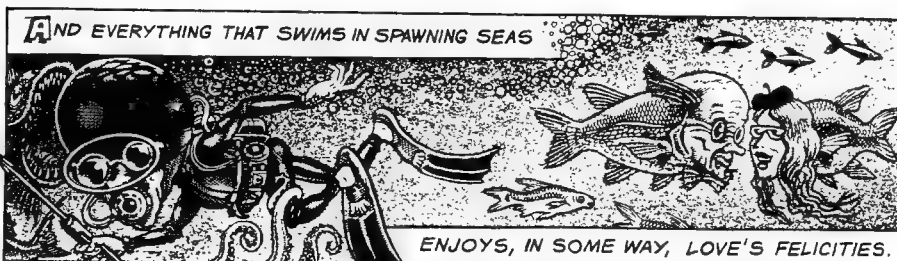
OLD LUST

21 years of Young Lust makes it old lust and while I laughed a lot at the first issue when I first saw it one afternoon at The Print Mint in Berkeley I didn't laugh once at the 7th issue. That one came out this year. Now my failure to laugh does not make YL a bad comic book. It just means I'm older and somewhat jaded in the lust department.

I thought Jay Kinney's transportation of Betty Page to Korea was an interesting exercise in cartoonery of the absurd and I liked Bill Griffith's drawing of a van hitting a teddy bear and I feel that Harry S. Robins is probably one of the best artists ever to infiltrate the underground and I suspect Spain is still being called a sexist otherwise why all that defensive stuff so on the whole YL7 shapes up quite well. It better at \$3.50 a copy. As a parody of a love comic, it rates low if at all. I don't get the feeling that the artists therein have looked at any love comics for quite some time. I hate to say it, guys, but today's talk shows are a lot funnier and contemporary. I see no justification for calling this a back to romance issue, but artists usually do their own thing in comics like YL whatever the stated theme.

YOUNG LUST 7 is \$5 by mail from Last Gasp, POB 410067, San Francisco, CA 94141 and you'd best send an age statement, because underground comix are adults only.

Latest rumor is that Betty Page will appear on the convention circuit this year, so look for her. Be interesting to hear what Betty thinks of all the attention being given her younger self.



To transcribe thoughts spontaneously without any rational aesthetic constraint, to apply a paranoia critique to liberate men from the tyranny of the rational world.
-Salvador Dali's definition of Surrealism.

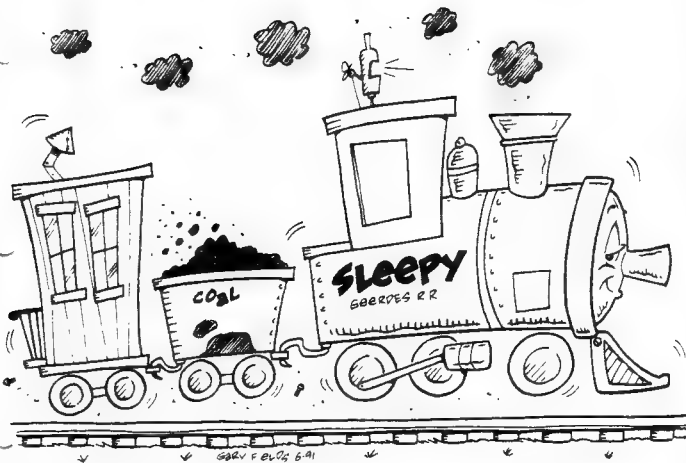
NO! I MUST KNOW THE SUMMIT OF LOVE'S CHARMS: APOLLO'S GLORY, APHRODITE'S ARMS.



YOUNG LUST

Twentieth Anniversary Issue





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I read Jay Kennedy's letter in the latest **City Limits Gazette** and thought I would respond in my newsletter since I might have too much to say for Steve to print. Of course, Jay's listing of books and zines will be *subjective and arbitrary*. All listings are. But when he starts talking about what he is going to include and exclude from the new edition of his price guide and me and all the guys who published newwaves with me over the years are automatically excluded, that requires comment. Jay is asking whether or not someone is underground or alternative enough to be included in his guide and I have to shake my head at this line of thought. To be self-published is to be unique, to be one of those who refuses to allow someone else's taste to dictate what should or should not be written or drawn, hence to be outside the work-for-hire world where one's work belongs to the company and fits the company image.

remained regular hobbyists, drawing when they felt the urge, raising their families, getting older and wiser, sharing some of what they did with their kids.

Look at it this way, a price guide is a commercial publication, more about money than art. Those who are included get a little ego boost if they are mentioned in the right light and those who are excluded are made to feel unworthy when they are just as worthy as those arbitrarily listed.

Jay talks about the original underground comix coming from the artist's inspiration. They weren't 'formula-ridden genre pieces.' Ah, but many of them are now quite formula ridden. Anyone seen a copy of Crumb's **ID? A CHERRY POPTART?** So do you list these, Jay, just because they were drawn by Crumb and Welz? You don't have to draw muscle bound guys in their underwear to become formula ridden. You can draw caricatures of yourself torturing women when you're in your mid-forties and be pretty up to your epiglottis in formula.

Whether you can avoid formula and make a living in the cartoon world is a good question for debate. Watterson is taking a year off because he has become trapped in formula. You can't spin very far off Winnie the Pooh and Peanuts, not within the mundane limitations of the American comic strip. The biggest success of this decade thus far is total formula. Hey, yesterday's Batman is today's Ninja Turtle.

There was a lot of really nice artwork in the newwave comix, but the majority of the comics community rejected the form and were therefore unable to see the content. Kennedy is arbitrarily setting up the same parameters in his price guide. You list what everyone already knows about and ignore the new and unique. Hey, you want to read about the truly unusual pubs of our time, you read Mike Gunderoy's **FACTSHEET FIVE**. There's a guy who lists *everything* or tries. -C.G.

Clark Dissmeyer's **PROPAGANDA WAR** is up to #5. Send him a stamp and get one. Box 1531, Kearney, NE 68848.

From Rip Off Press comes the second issue of Annie Sprinkle's **THE ADVENTURES OF MISS TIMED**. \$2.50 at your local store.

Graham Johnstone and Kevin Hobbs have published the first issue of **DEAD TREES**. There are six projected issues. Information either of the artists c/o 125 Downhill Street, Glasgow G12 9DN. I don't have a US price on this magazine.

BY CLAY GEERDES

THE SLEEPY LITTLE ENGINE. A children's story to be read to kids with trains on the brain.

\$2.50 pp.

ESSAYS: VOLUME ONE. A group of essays about my early life for those readers who have always wondered who the hell Clay Geerdes is and what he is really like.

\$3.50 pp.

ESSAYS: VOLUME TWO. More general essays, a couple of which have appeared in **COMIX WAVE** or elsewhere.

\$3.50 pp.

A 29¢ stamp will get you a free sample of **BABY SUE**. P. O. Box 1111, Decatur, GA 30031-1111.

Jay is going to list Gary Arlington's 7-centers, presumably because many of them were drawn by artists who later made their mark in underground comix, yet he is not going to list the Comix World Mini-series where Kevin Eastman and others did their apprentice work!

If it is impossible to list everything, Jay, then why list anything at all? Why update the Guide? If the Comic Buyer's Guide is doing such a good listing job, why duplicate it? If the motivation for doing the guide is collector interest, one might ask if there was ever enough interest in ugs and bw's and alternatives to justify a guide. I know it didn't sell. My own original guide to newwave comix didn't sell. I never cared about that anymore than most of the guys who worked with me. We were having a good time, just hobbyists most of us—we never thought of newwave as a business.

I know there were small groups of guys in high schools all over the country who thought of the minis or newwaves as a business, but that's their fantasy and they have a right to it. Some continued to do comics long after they graduated and I suspect they had a good time with it all, keeping in touch with friends. I always enjoyed the camaraderie of newwave. When I got a piece of art in the mail, it made me laugh and I ran it off and got some copies in the mail right away. For about three years we had an energetic core group and some of those guys went on to make a living out of art, but most

Scientists are actually preoccupied with accomplishment. So they are focused on whether they can do something. They never stop to ask if they should do something. They conveniently define such considerations as pointless. If they don't do it, someone else will. Discovery, they believe, is inevitable. So they just try to do it first. That's the game in science. Even pure scientific discovery is an aggressive, penetrative act. It takes big equipment, and it literally changes the world afterward. Particle accelerators scar the land, and leave radioactive byproducts. Astronauts leave trash on the moon. There is always some proof that scientists were there, making their discoveries. Discovery is always a rape of the natural world. Always.

Michael Crichton
JURASSIC PARK, 1990.

Young people try to live the correct life, to have the correct image. How do they know? TV tells them so. It shows them what to wear and drive, what attitude to manifest, but what if TV is lying to them—what if they are leading incorrect lives behind false images? What if they are nothing more than the products they consume?

In the postmodern world maybe war will come to be understood as a performing art, made for television and promoted as spectacle. Maybe, as the producers of the charades on MTV would have it, Madonna is Marilyn Monroe, true love is a perfume bottle, and George Bush is Winston Churchill.

Lewis Lapham
Haper's, May, 1991.

EL VIBORA 135 is \$9 pp from J. M. Berenguer, Plaza Beatas, 3, Barcelona, Spain. Adult sex material.

R. K. Sloane's **PORTRAIT OF A SERIAL ARTIST** will be showing at La Luz de Jesus Gallery in Los Angeles from July 5-23, 1991.

HACKER ETHIC

The bottom line of programming was ineluctably tied to the bottom line on a publisher's ledger sheet. Elegance, innovation, and coding pyrotechnics were much admired, but a new criterion for hacker stardom had crept into the equation: awesome sales figures. Early hackers might have regarded this as heresy: all software—all information—should be free, they'd argue, and pride should be invested in how many people use your program and how much they are impressed with it. But the Third Generation hackers never had the sense of community of their predecessors, and early on they came to see healthy sales figures as essential to becoming winners.

—Steven Levy, **HACKERS**, 1984.

WERTHAM REVISITED

I've been following the '60's/UG comix discussion with interest, but I think your comment on opposing comics to heighten interest (CW 104) is offbase. Wertham didn't popularize horror comics by opposing them, but he did help stifle an industry that was on the verge of really getting good. The horror comics were probably on their way out anyway, but the resultant furor wrecked sales for all comics.

Wertham stumbled on comics by accident. He was an expert on child violence, remember, meaning violence perpetrated by *children*. His book, **Show of Violence**, is all about child killers. The irony of publishing such a work at the height of World War II was steamrollered by Wertham's nonamused Freudian article. Possible it was Gershon Legman, a superb crank and pre-Factsheet Five self-publisher, that steered Dr. Fred onto comics. Legman was convinced that violence was sublimated sex but Wertham was more interested in offering succor to socio-neurosis than in determining its cause. During the post-war period adults tended to project their fears and insecurities on children. Russia beats the US at the Olympics and the President orders physical fitness standards to be raised in the schools. Sputnik is launched, Vanguard blows up on the launch pad, and Americans are convinced that it's the fault of children who don't learn enough science at school. Remember **Why Johnny Can't Read--and Ivan Can't The Little Red Schoolhouse** and other fear pubs of the era? So, too, did adults visit their own violence on children. It's no accident the child violence scare accompanied war. In 1953, Wertham offered an escape for adults disturbed by violence" they could end violence in children, and, psychically, rid themselves of guilt. War babies were voodoo dolls for their parents.

When Fred discovered horror/crime comics he touched a nexus where juvenile delinquency, bourgeois insecurity, and other neural paths of the group psyche met. It was a concatenation of opportunity that he never found again, though he touched it once more, in the mid-seventies, when television violence was cited as a causative factor in a Florida child murder. Wertham was cited as an expert in news magazines covering the case. But child violence was no longer such a useful whipping boy (sorry). The battered-child syndrome had been discovered a decade before and the

Don't trust your senses. Juxtapositions frequently lead to false conclusions. Fast food and sugar drinks make you fat, not slim and beautiful. Models never eat the products they promote. Movie and tv fantasies are never true. Just because you heard it on tv doesn't mean it really happened. Reckless drivers kill other people and themselves. The most dangerous and destructive drugs, cigarettes and alcohol, are legal.

sex-abuse flap was about to get going. It was ludicrous to see children as perpetrators of the violence they were obviously receiving. Then, too, having grown up as constant recipients of parental projection, war babies had become used to being targets; self-abuse and the elevation of the victim role are the order of the day so parents, not children, are now the perceived criminals.

Between the height of Wertham's fame and his brief appearance in the seventies, he published **A Sign For Cain**, another work which promoted the idea that if all depiction/description of violence was eliminated from society, then violence itself would disappear. "Crime and Punishment would have been a better book if Dostoyevsky had left out the murder," he said. This sort of notion permeates most rationales for censorship but few have taken it to Freddie's extremes. The man had the narrow-minded conviction of a Torquemada.

Well, we don't have Fred to kick around any more but the point of all this is: in 1969, Clay Geerdes could not have aided UG comix by attacking them. Wertham's crusade was big news because of the coincidence of historic vectors. Ripeness is all.

—Mike Culpepper
(I was being hypothetical, Mike, making the assumption that things grow when there is a reaction against them and die when basically ignored. Look what happened to **2 Live Crew**, for example, when there was a strong reaction against them in Florida. Before the reaction, they were just one of hundreds of rap groups. Afterward, it was hard to find a copy of **As Nasty as They Wanna Be** anywhere. Now there has been a strong negative reaction to many different underground comix and there are trials in progress around the country but very little attention is given to them in the mainstream press and I've yet to see a cartoonist, over or underground, on any of the major talk shows (and please do not tell me about Harvey Pekar trading insults with Letterman, because Pekar is not a cartoonist and those late night shows are stand up comedy and ad plugs, not serious discussion like **Donahue**).

While Wertham's book did not appear until 1953, he was actively crusading on the PTA circuit by 1947 while EC was still publishing **Picture Stories From The Bible**. It's my feeling that McCarthyism had as much if not more to do with the suppression of the comics in the early fifties than Wertham's ideas. A good discussion of the entire subject is included in Martin Barker's **A HAUNT OF FEARS** (Pluto Press, 1984). See also **THE MAD WORLD OF WILLIAM M. GAINES**.

A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada arrived in New York City in 1965 carrying seven dollars in rupees, the phone number of the son of a friend, and a few battered cooking utensils. When Prabhupada died in Vrindaban, India, in 1977, the International Society for Krishna Consciousness [ISKCON], the movement he started in a New York storefront, had over 200 temples and farms in sixty countries, ten of thousands of followers, and tens of millions of dollars. In the United States alone, ISKCON had fifty-seven temples and farms, more than five thousand devotees, and thousands of uninitiated believers.

COMIX PLUGOLA

Wars lay waste a generation, they say: fear of war has wasted one of ours. And how we made them feel it, our young, with our talk of nuclear winter and Armageddon! The revenge of the old upon the young, to deprive them thus of all hope of the future. Look at them now; how they appall you! Hollow-eyed, white-faced, black-clothed, they walk like zombies round the streets, puffing in or shooting up the dreary stuff, which makes the present real, enables them to smile, and lift a languid hand in salutation to their friends. They vomit if they can, they sick it all up: and if their digestions in spite of all abuse stay sound, they drop their litter instead: walk ankle deep in discarded Coke cans, beer tins, fast food packs, dust and rubbish of every kind, not to mention the excreta of rats and dogs, and they don't care one bit. It even seems to cheer them up a trifle, looking at all this, you are assailed by guilt and confusion, and you think, what's happened can only be this: that once there was a golden age, and everything ever since has been a falling away from that.

—Fay Weldon
DARCY'S UTOPIA, 1990

Get thee to a library and read therein.
Would'st be a breeder of illiterate clods?

Thirty thousand years ago, when men were doing cave paintings at Lescaux, they worked twenty hours a week to provide themselves with food and shelter and clothing. The rest of the time, they could play, or sleep, or do whatever they wanted. And they lived in a natural world, with clean air, clean water, beautiful trees and sunsets. Think about it. Twenty hours a week. Thirty thousand years ago.

Michael Crichton
JURASSIC PARK, 1990.

You know what's wrong with scientific power? It's a form of inherited wealth. And you know what assholes congenitally rich people are. It never fails.

Michael Crichton
JURASSIC PARK, 1990.

The quotations that run around my newsletter are from books I have read and I recommend them to those of you seeking to expand your consciousness. I like the work of Michael Crichton who takes contemporary scientific possibilities and projects them into the future. Crichton asked what if the astronauts were to bring an alien virus back to Earth and the result was **THE ANDROMEDA STRAIN**. In his latest novel, **JURASSIC PARK**, he takes on the biotech industry and speculates about what might happen if dinosaurs were cloned.

The major flaw in the domestic use of disinformation is that it results in a fragmented community which is easier to control in some ways and impossible to control or predict in others.

Reason and ridicule can get rid of faith but the guilt and fear of punishment associated with free thinking remain.

—Fay Weldon
DARCY'S UTOPIA, 1990

That's what gay couples do when they go into a men's room together. They take a shopping bag along. One stands in the bag, and all you see below the partition is a man with a shopping bag.

—Andy Warhol

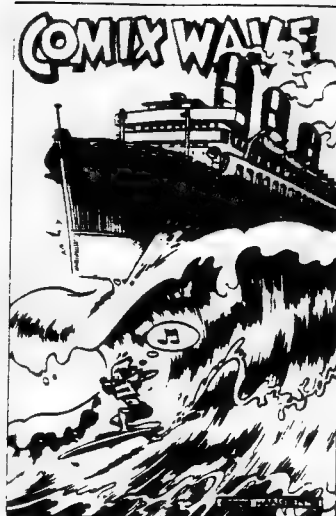
It is both sobering and painful to realize, after twenty-five years of undercover work . . . that my career was meaningless and had had absolutely no effect whatsoever in the so-called war on drugs. The war itself is a fraud.

—Michael Levine
DEEP COVER, 1990.

In cartooning as in acting or architecture, the question is not so much *can* you do it, but *will* you get the opportunity to do it.

By the time most people decide what they want to spend their life doing, they've already spent most of it doing something else.

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COMIX PLUGOLA

RAW V. 2, #3 is out from Penguin Books so get a copy at your local bookstore and read the latest stories of folks like Art Spiegelman, Joost Swarte, Justin Green, Gary Panter, Krystine Kritte, Alan Moore, et al. If you can't get RAW where you are, you can order a copy by mail from Catalan Communications, 43 Ea 19th, NYC, NY 10003. \$16.95 pp. This issue contains an early Krazy Kat story by Herriman.

Look around for **THE WORLD OF WARD 1**. Great reprints of the ultra-sex art of Bill Ward as well as a collection of the pin-up art of Jack Cole. Women never existed the way Bill Ward drew them, but then if they had he would not have had to have drawn them that way, would he? Imagine Bugs Bunny saying this line.

Harvey has revived **TOM AND JERRY** and the good news about this is the reprints of the Barks' Barney Bear and Benny Burro stories contained therein. Barney was an old fave of mine. He started out in **OUR GANG** before it became the early **TOM AND JERRY**. In the forties a lot of animators made some extra bucks moonlighting for comic companies. They drew comic book versions of their screen cartoons and as many other stories as they could come up with. I was always amazed at how prolific these guys were. After inbetweening all day at one of the studios, they went home to the drawing board at night!

The Lite Rail Gallery, 918 12th Street, in Sacramento, California, will host a retrospective of the Art of Guy Colwell. Guy is the creator of **The Inner-City Romance Comic** and his recent **DOLL** series was a hit from Rip Off Press. The show runs from June 8 through July 8, 1991, so stop in and check out Guy's paintings if you're up that way.

Get thee to a library and read therein.
Would'st be a breeder of illiterate clods?

The Gulf War has laid to rest, for once and always, the romantic notion that Bay Area alternative print in the 1990s might function as did the so-called "Underground Press" during a previous war. Back then, rags like the *Barb* (and later, the *Tribe*) and the *Express* (later the *Good Times*) were born in crisis and tempered in struggle, subterranean instruments of response that so challenged the State the FBI was summoned to run a serious COINTELPRO operation on them (see Geoffrey Rips' *UnAmerican Activities*). These sloppy sexist, poorly-edited sheets incited an urgency that today's "alternative" establishment press cannot afford. But then, Max Scherr probably did not wait for the futon shoppe lines to come in before launching the *Barb* on Vietnam Day 1985 and when the *Good Times* Collective went daily during the Cambodian Spring, it was the necessity of the moment that dedicated how much news could be fit to print, not the Whole Earth Access display.

John Ross

The Fire Next Time
Anderson Valley Advertiser
April 17, 1991, p. 7.

BY CLAY GEERDES

THE SLEEPY LITTLE ENGINE. A children's story to be read to kids with trains on the brain.

\$2.50 pp.

ESSAYS: VOLUME ONE. A group of essays about my early life for those readers who have always wondered who the hell Clay Geerdes is and what he is really like.

\$3.50 pp.

ESSAYS: VOLUME TWO. More general essays, a couple of which have appeared in **COMIX WAVE** or elsewhere.

\$3.50 pp.

Check out **THE HERMIT OF 69TH STREET**, the last book from Jerzy Kosinski. He killed himself last month. The hermit is himself and the book is an intellectual diary. Kosinski was a holocaust survivor and he told his story in his first novel, **THE PAINTED BIRD**. My favorite is **COCKPIT**, but most of you probably know of Kosinski from the Peter Sellers' movie **BEING THERE**. No, I don't know the details of JK's suicide. I know he was involved in a plagiarism suit not long back, but this is the fate of most novelists. Hey, it's the subject of Judith Rossner's latest **HIS LITTLE WOMEN**. And if you haven't read either Kosinski or Rossner, go out and read all of their books and let me know what you think. -c.g.

EL VIBORA 135 and 136 are \$9 each from J. M. Berengueuer, Plaza Beatas 3, Barcelona, Spain. The ultimate in Spanish sex art.

What every editor wants-- and every reader, for that matter--can be summed up in four paradoxical words: *the same only different*. Your story must be the same as innumerable other stories so that it may provide a similar kind of satisfaction to the reader. Yet it must simultaneously differ sufficiently from all of those other stories so that the reader will not feel it's something he's read over and over in the past.

Lawrence Block

TELLING LIES FOR FUN AND PROFIT,
1981

Remember to include an age statement when you order any underground or sex comix. I know most of you guys get your moms to buy them for you, but...

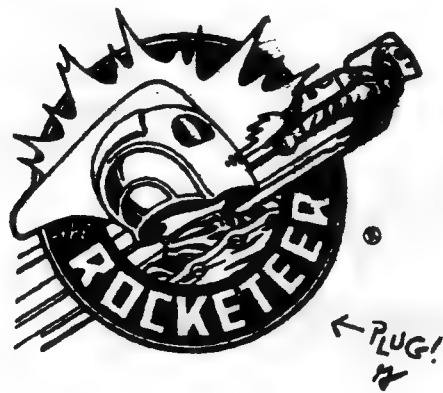
A television network on assignment to a war imagines itself outfitted with the trappings of immortality.

Lewis Lapham
Harper's, May, 1991.

Randy Reynaldo has the first issue of **ROB HANES** out. Rob reminds me a lot of Jack Armstrong. If you liked the adventure strips in the papers and still prefer a certain amount of naiveté in your comix, you'll probably enjoy this one. \$3.25 pp by mail from Brave New Words, POB 20421, Providence, RI 02920. Standard B/W comic with color cover. Nice artwork.

Get a \$3.00 copy of **PUSH-BUTTON CONTROLLER** from Ben Gordon at 123 Saratoga Road, Box 128, Glenville, NY 12302. Ben has a nice writing style, a voice you can year. This issue contains a biographical article with a lot of humorous anecdotes therein. 64 pp, 8 1/2 x 11.

The seventh part of the Melmoth story is featured in **CEREBUS** 146 now on sale at your local comic emporium.



Harrington's political cartoon art radiates life's 'true observations'

by Pat Fry

DETROIT

Detroit showered a celebrity welcome on life-long political cartoonist Ollie Harrington, who kicked off an extraordinary week of lectures, workshops and the opening of his retrospective exhibit at the Museum of African-American History. Sponsored by several African-American media organizations, Detroit's three major newspapers and the *People's Weekly World*, it was his first visit to the U.S. in 20 years.

Harrington is renowned for his satirical cartoons, "Bootsie" and "Little Luther," vehicles for ongoing commentary on racism and an array of social issues in the U.S. during the 1930s to 1960s. His work appeared in the *Pough Courier*, *Amsterdam News*, *Baltimore Sun*, and the



Ollie Harrington

Daily Worker and its successors through to the *People's Weekly World*.

Harrington recalled for a packed crowd his artistic beginnings as a student at Public School 35 in the South Bronx, N.Y. Harrington and a classmate were the only Black students at the school.

"Very often our teacher, Miss McCoy, used to call us up to the front of the room and say, 'They belong in the trash basket,'" said Harrington. "I couldn't do anything to defend myself, so I began doing drawings of Miss McCoy, and I might say they were drawings Miss McCoy would not consider pieces of art."

After graduation, his drawings focused on a local police officer who enjoyed finding ways of whipping Black youngsters with his club. Harrington said, "There was nothing we could do about it so I all I could do was to include Officer Dugan in my gallery of drawings."

The Bootsie cartoon was created against the backdrop of the 1930s Harlem Renaissance, an explosive period of African-American cultural expression in music, art, poetry, and literature. Bootsie depicted the Jim Crow segregation in Harlem, flaunted at places like Frank's Restaurant and the Cotton Club. While gangsters like Dutch Schultz frequented such places, Black people were barred as patrons, said Harrington.

Harrington's graduate studies in fine arts at Yale were interrupted by World War II. Har-

ington served as a correspondent in Europe. Harrington recalled the post-war campaign of violence against Black veterans in the south.

Because of segregation in the army, he explained, Blacks could not spend money easily: clubs were for "whites only." So with cash in hand upon their return to the U.S., Black veterans began to buy up little plots of farm land.

"Well, they had no way of thinking this out, but this was considered one of the greatest threats to 'democracy' in the south," said Harrington. "Great waves of lynchings took place."

Harrington was urged to accept the post of head of public relations for the NAACP. Fearing he would be taken away from his artistic work, Harrington resisted until the savage beating of Black veteran Isaac Woodard.

Woodard, a young vet returning home from the Pacific through the Jim Crow south, was dragged off a bus in South Carolina and beaten by two policemen who gouged out both his eyes. Choking back tears, Harrington said, "Well, this was a little too much for me. So, I accepted the offer at the NAACP and went in to organize the public relations department."

The Woodard beating and the search for his attackers became a national case for the NAACP, said Harrington. There were no known assailants, no hospital records and Woodard was unable to say exactly where he was when the beating took place.



"That's right, as Reagan says, I'm here by choice. So please deliver it to my mansion down the street and I'll have my chauffeur here pick it up later."

Launching a spectacular publicity campaign, Harrington solicited the help of Orson Welles. Welles did a series of weekly broadcasts on Woodard's case in an effort to track down the assailants. After six months, they were found in South Carolina, brought to trial and then acquitted. For his part in the effort, Welles was fired by CBS, blacklisted by the film industry and forced into exile in Europe. Harrington would soon follow.

Similar cases were championed by the NAACP that won some important successes, said Harrington. "Eventually, what I was doing at the NAACP came to the attention of Tom Clark, the attorney general. Clark named me as a Communist."

"If it could have been proved that an executive of the NAACP was a Communist, that was all they wanted. The idea was to drive Black organizations into the patriotic frenzy, and I would have no part of this," said Harrington. "If I stayed and had been brought up on charges which were in the making, they would have been able to attack the NAACP."

Friends advised him to "take a little trip to Europe, a little vacation until it blew over." Harrington left in 1951 with his close friend, novelist Richard Wright. "It turned out to be a vacation of 40 years," he said.

Throughout his years in Europe, Harrington continued his Bootsie cartoons until 1963 when the *Chicago Defender* was forced to suspend him under "certain pressures," he said. In 1961, Harrington left Paris for East Berlin. There he started a new line of cartoons in color, published in the German Democratic Republic's top satirical magazine, *Eulenspiegel*.

Harrington said the German reunification "has left a very strange atmosphere there. People in the east have destroyed something," he said. "There was good reason for demanding change and reform but you have to have plans on what's going to happen after you throw out the government."

"We had no such plans, so all the people in the east have become second-class citizens. All of the social benefits which were very, very extensive have been eliminated. Unemployment has reached 50 percent and I would say there is a very, very dangerous situation developing there." Despite the difficulties, Harrington will return "because I have a family there."

Harrington's exhibit at the Museum of African-American History runs through June. The cartoons displayed are based on actual experiences of his life and "true observations," he said. "There's not a lie in the whole exhibit."

The suits, politicians, and bureaucrats are more the Enemy in a real war on drugs, than any drug dealer who ever lived. It is their mistakes, false promises, and ineptitude that keep us on a path to more useless death and destruction. They—like the generals and the politicians of Viet Nam—don't gamble with their own lives; they risk those of others. Their primary concerns are public image, their individual careers, and the funding of their election campaigns, and bureaucracies. They are the ones who most fear the words of the frontline soldier.

—Michael Levine
DEEP COVER, 1990.





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BIG DOG DIGEST 1 is \$1.50 pp from David M. Pitts, 2709 S. Taylor, Amarillo, TX 79109.

PROPAGANDA WAR 6 for an SASE from Clark Dissmeyer, POB 1531, Kearney, NE 68848.

Bill Shut returns with a duo. **INSUFFICIENT DADA DIGEST** and **INSUFFICIENT DADA MINI**. 2.50 pp for both from Jamie Alder, 24816 Aden Ave., Newhall, CA 91321.

BULL DOG is a one-shot comic zine by the makers of **VETO Magazine** in Montreal, Canada. \$3 pp from Martin Lemm, C. P. 5313, Succ. "C", Montreal, Quebec, Canada H2X 3M4. Some French commentary on comix.

BY CLAY GEERDES

THE SLEEPY LITTLE ENGINE. A children's story to be read to kids with trains on the brain. \$2.50 pp.

ESSAYS: VOLUME ONE. A group of essays about my early life for those readers who have always wondered who the hell Clay Geerdes is and what he is really like. \$3.50 pp.

ESSAYS: VOLUME TWO. More general essays, a couple of which have appeared in **COMIX WAVE** or elsewhere. \$3.50 pp.

SAILOR: An extended account of my Navy years. \$3.00 pp.

Just because it is displayed in a museum or an art gallery doesn't mean it's art.

Fiddle makers often had to overcome great difficulties in the pursuit of their craft, using pieces of broken bottles as scrapers, for example, until they could acquire the proper tools. Young musicians who could not buy or borrow instruments sometimes improvised their first fiddles from wooden cigar boxes, using cypress slats from the barn for necks and bones for pegs. Many faced parental wrath for unraveling window screens to make strings and sneaking thread from the sewing box to supply hairs for bows made of bent branches. Sometimes they even raided the family horse for a few strands from its mane or tail. Wedisson Reed of Eunice whittled instruments from cypress planks and eventually adapted his craft to include top and back plates of spray-painted formica. Paul Devillier of Arnaudville used lumber two-by-fours for his first fiddle and interior paneling for his second. Homemade instruments such as these, born of stubborn desire, symbolize the Cajuns' passion for making music.

CAJUN COUNTRY, 1991

Cajun music is very big in the Bay Area these days and bands like Bayou Pon Pon, Sugar Bee, California Cajun Orchestra, and Motor Dude Zydeco play regularly at Ashkenaz, the club where I work. If you're into the culture and music of the Cajuns, you'll want a copy of **CAJUN COUNTRY**. If you can't find it in your local bookstore, you can order a copy from the University of Mississippi Press, 3825 Ridgewood Road, Jackson, MS 39211-6492. It's around \$18 pp. The book is filled with history, maps, and some nice photographs.

I agree with Steve Willis that an open database is the logical way to list all comix and that a library is the logical place for this. It would be nice to think that any of us could simply call in and download our latest, and that any user with the spare paper could print the entire listing anytime, but it's not that simple. For those who think it is, I recommend **THE CUCKOO'S EGG**. All of us who work with PCs and print on public terminals have suffered virus problems and I am just enough of a skeptic to think there is more than one asshole out there who would think it was funny as hell to download a virus designed to fuck up a comic database.

I still have trouble with the money trip attached to any Price Guide. The values listed in the Kennedy Guide in 1983 were all arbitrary, just as much as those Overstreet has been listing for the past twenty years. Any comic or piece of original artwork is worth what someone is willing to pay someone else for it. Pricing is manipulated all the time by the major companies and the stores that play ball with them. You can't manufacture rarity, yet it is happening all the time. If there are a million copies of something floating around, that book is never going to be rare no matter how much hype is written around it in the Buyer's Guide and Comics Journal. If it has Collector's Item on the cover, it isn't. I saw bagged copies of **GHOST RIDER 15** on sale in a Berkeley comic store this morning for \$7 apiece and that book has only been out about a month. Give me a break! Stores get these books from Marvel or DC and they hold them back from the public a few weeks then double or triple the price on them. I know this is part of the game these days, but it spells greed to me just like it always did.

What I have seen in my lifetime is a hobby I enjoyed become just one more possession of the rich. When you start talking about comic books that cost several dollars, you're talking about a privileged buyer who is making a lot of money or has a father who is. When I was a boy, the poorest kid in the neighborhood could buy a ten cent comic. Price Guides contribute to a continual escalation of value, one which is artificial and contrived to benefit a select few who already own the oldest and most valuable comic books listed. No one in my circle can collect the early copies of **ACTION** or **SUPERMAN** that sell for thousands of dollars. A guide used to cost a couple of bucks and even these sell for \$15-20 these days.

The appeal of the lottery winner is deeply engrained in the American psyche. In fact, the myth of striking it rich is a basic one in our culture, but then so is the opposing Puritan ethic deploring the vice of extravagance. We are a society in transition, still engaged in the battle between the stern values of our forefathers and our present worship of affluence and celebrity. Our compromise is to revel in opulence vicariously, but to relish tales of rich people who experience a comeuppance. We still need to hear that the rich are corrupt, unhappy, lead empty lives, and are plagued with misfortune...

—Barbara Goldsmith
JOHNSON V. JOHNSON



"SMILE WHEN YOU SAY THAT, PARTNER."

You are in the land of gross excess weirdness. The land of Amnesia and Sunshine Lobotomy. The land of total Concrete Rejection. Where the past has been paved over. Emptiness is all around. And the neon wilderness sparkles like junk jewelry under perpetual good weather. To be in L.A. is like being in the hole of a doughnut, with only the illusion that there is even a doughnut around the hole. Anything bad that anyone has ever said about Southern California is true.

James Horwitz

THEY WENT THATAWAY, 1976.

Horwitz is a Front Row Kid from New York who gave himself the task of looking up all the old Cowboy stars from the early days of the western movies. This book is more about him and his reactions and the old folks who refused to go through the rap again than it is about the westerns, but he manages to cover a lot of territory and get the basics across. You find out whatever happened to various people like Gene Autry and Roy Rogers and Tim McCoy and you get a lot of funny anecdotes about the subculture that has formed around old cowboy movies the way it has around other fantasies like Star Trek and Ninja Turtles and Elvis Presley. I grew up on Gene Autry and The Durango Kid and The Cisco Kid and Tim Holt, mainly because my dad was a fan and took me and my brother along to the Colonial Theater in Lincoln just about every Friday night of our childhood. The cowboy hero was a moralist then, a good guy, nothing like what you see in the post-spaghetti westerns of today. One of my favorite scenes was seeing Tim McCoy, dressed in black, walk into a saloon, step up to the bar, and order a glass of milk. Naturally, some macho trail bum would make fun of him and he would have to beat up half the guys in the bar. To be honest, I don't think he ever touched that glass of milk. He just ordered it. McCoy was an army colonel and an Indian expert, a well educated man who outlived all his peers. Horwitz found him retired in Nogales, Arizona. At 84, Tim, an old soldier, spoke out against the immorality and illegality of the Viet Nam war! And him a Republican, too.

THEY WENT THATAWAY is long out of print, but you can probably find a copy in a used bookstore and I think you'll enjoy reading about this period. Today's screen hero is too often a cold-blooded killer little different from the villains he slaughters over and over again. I've been watching some old Tim Holt westerns on video lately and they are a lot more fun.

ELEMENTARY, MY DEAR WATSON!

The male brain learns by manipulating its environment, yet the typical student is forced to sit still for long hours in the classroom. The male brain is primarily visual, while classroom instruction demands attentive listening. Boys are clumsy in fine hand coordination, yet are forced at an early age to express themselves in writing. Finally, there is little opportunity in most schools, other than during recess periods, for gross motor movements or rapid muscular responses. In essence, the classrooms in most of our nation's primary grades are geared to skills that come naturally to girls but develop very slowly in boys. The results shouldn't be surprising. a *learning disabled* child who is also frequently *hyperactive*.

Richard M. Restak:

The Brain: The Final Frontier.

If you have a unique experience and try to tell someone about it, no one will believe you. People have to fit what they hear into a familiar frame of reference and that frame usually expands or contracts with education and experience. When I was growing up in the forties, there were numerous movies about ghosts and spirits and angels. These otherworldly beings were readily accepted by the movie audience, an audience assumed to be mostly a white Christian entity. I saw all of these characters on the screen and in that context they were as real to me as anything else, but I never saw any of them in my real life. I was fascinated with magic for a while and found out how most of the illusions and tricks were done by reading about Houdini and Thurston and Blackstone. I saw some illusions in carnival and circus sideshows which were quite well done; I also saw others which were very poorly constructed and didn't even fool the ten-year-old looking at them. These days I have seen psychics and parapsychiatrists on talk shows and I don't believe much of anything they say. I see them as successful hustlers, like astrologists. Anyone familiar with psychedelic drugs and hallucinogens certainly realizes why certain people had visions and heard voices in the past.

When I was a boy, patent medicines were still sold to anyone in drugstores. Lots of these concoctions

contained hallucinogenic compounds. Cough syrups contained codeine and laudanum contained opium and a good shot of either one might convince the taker he or she was seeing a ghost or two.

The popularity of movies about ghosts, spirits, and angels in the late forties was a logical side effect of the Second World War. Millions died in that war and those who survived wanted very badly to believe that their fathers and husbands and wives were up there somewhere in Heaven waiting for them. As the war faded into the distance, Hollywood dropped the angels and went on to technicolor westerns.

Most of the ghost stories which began with Thorne Smith's TOPPER [written in 1926 and on film by 1937] were light fantasies, written about at the time as screwball comedies. Those that were serious often debunked the idea of spirits. The standard haunted house film ended with the discovery that they were not ghosts at all. Some gangsters or family members out to frighten other people out of the haunted house and they had used various gimmicks in the process. In all the films about angels, however, the angels were taken seriously. That was supposedly a real angel that came to visit the savings and loan manager played by James Stewart in IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE. Most of these visiting spirits date back to Charles Dickens' CHRISTMAS CAROL which I heard read over the radio every year of my childhood by Lionel Barrymore.

Actually, it was Stephen King that made the ghosts real. He took the staples of horror fiction and redid them all one by one, taking them seriously and never debunking a single one. Evil is real in the work of King and it is never balanced by Good. Do not suspect for a second that there is a rationale explanation for the demonic behavior of the car CHRISTINE or for the evil that manifests itself in IT. Stephen Spielberg took evil seriously in his work, too. The POLTERGEIST cannot be explained away anymore than the GREMLINS or the GHOULIES.

\$2 will get you a sample of Joe Bob Briggs' WE ARE THE WEIRD newsletter. POB 2002, Dallas, TX 75221. "Nobody is going to steal your ideas," says Joe Bob in V. 7, No. 24. "You don't get widely plagiarized until you're widely published--and then it doesn't matter." JB calls me a hippie in this issue, but don't hold that against him. Actually, I think all hippies come from Texas. After all, an Austin man, Gilbert Shelton, invented the Freak Brothers. Myself, I was born in Iowa and raised in Nebraska.

I've always been here somewhere. I'm the white space in this newsletter, always back here grinning through the print. I juggle the pieces for you, paste up reality so you can make of it what you will.

CLAY GEERDES' Comix Wave



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IN CASE YOU THOUGHT DISINFORMATION WAS NEW

On December 6, 1890, Baum [L. Frank] wrote a rather edgy "funny" column for his newspaper in Aberdeen, Dakota Territory. He turns inside out the official American line that the Sioux Indians were getting ready to massacre all the whites. Baum pretends to interview an Indian Chief who tells him that the Indians are terrified of being massacred by the whites. Two weeks after this story was published, the U. S. Seventh Cavalry slaughtered three hundred Indian men, women, and children at nearby Wounded Knee.

--Gore Vidal

Question is why did MAD, still the top selling comic magazine, lose 102,480 readers in 1990? TV GUIDE lost 449,378 readers in 1990. That should tell you something about the new poverty in this decade of ultimate greed. Even PLAYBOY dropped over 100,000 readers. Imagine that! Teenaged boys having to whack off over last month's Playmate!

Eric Vincent illustrated AESOP'S FABLES for CLASSICS ILLUSTRATED and the artwork is exquisite. Look for this one at your local store.

Gilbert Shelton did the cover for E.L. VIBORA 137. \$9 from J. M. Berengueuer, Plaza Beatas 3, Barcelona, Spain.

I loved CULTURAL JETLAG 1, the new book by Tom Roberts and Jim Siergey from Fantagraphics.

Clark Dissmeyer's PROPAGANDA WAR 8 is free from him for an SASE. POB 1531, Kearney, NE 68848.

TWISTED IMAGE 30 is \$1/stamp from Ace Backwards, 1630 University Ave., Apt. 26, Berkeley, CA 94703.

CEREBUS 59,60, and 61 have been reprinted. This is one of the longest alternative comix to remain in print. It ranks close to ZAP.

I see the British nose is as blue as ever. A shipment of COMPLETE CRUMBS was ordered destroyed because of all that nasty sex stuff. Well, whaddaya gonna do? Sex is fun and God forbid that anyone should have fun on her bovine majesty's turf. Just think if England ever crawled out of the middle ages and 86ed the parasitic royal family, how would they attract the tourists? I guess they could all go to San Francisco and watch the Gay Parade, but would it be the same?

Send Matthew Guest a buck and get SNAP HAPPIE. 3007 Cockrell Ave., Ft. Worth, TX 76109.

Robert Pasternak's ACID MAN 15, a trilogy of mini-art is \$1.50 pp from Clay Geerdes, Box 7094, Berkeley 94707.

The American vice is explanation.
--Gore Vidal

The latest from Rip Off Press is RIP OFF COMIX #30. If you can't get these comix in your area, send a buck to Fred Todd at POB 4686, Auburn, CA 95604 and he'll send you the latest catalog.

The success of the American dream, like the success of MasterCard and the Republican Party, presupposes the eager and uncritical consumption of junk in all its commercial declensions.

Lewis Lapham, HARPER'S, July, 1991.

Turns out Betty Page will not be making the convention rounds this summer. It was all a put-on that originated from Larry Shell.

ALL IN THE MIND

Not long after construction began on the Brooklyn Bridge, designer Washington Roebling was trapped for several hours during a fire in one of the underwater caissons and came out of it with a severe case of the bends, an excruciating disease in which nitrogen bubbles gather in the bloodstream. Nearly killed by the attack, he was thereafter an invalid, unable to leave the top floor room where he and his wife set up house in Brooklyn Heights. There Washington Roebling sat every day for many years, watching the progress of the bridge through a telescope, sending his wife down every morning with his instructions, drawing elaborate color pictures for the foreign workers who spoke no English so they would understand what to do next, and the remarkable thing was that the whole bridge was literally in his head; every piece of it had been memorized, down to the tiniest bits of steel and stone, and though Washington Roebling never set foot on the bridge, it was totally present inside him, as though by the end of all those years it had somehow grown into his body.

Paul Auster
GHOSTS, 1986.

I'm always amazed at the shabbiness of the awards America gives for achievement. A man wins every event in the Olympic Games and what is his reward? He is given the privilege of selling cameras on television. Another man quarterbacks his football team through the Super Bowl to a World Championship more than once and what is he allowed to do? Sell cars on television. The corporate hucksters in this country think they are elevating their products by associating them with athletic superiority but I don't see it that way. I see them degrading the athletes by making them nothing more than products. As for the movies, well, a fine actor can play an athlete, but athletes make terrible actors. Most are all right in motion, but when they have to stand and talk, forget it. Try to imagine for a moment what would happen if they gave Lou Ferrigno the lines and painted Bill Bixby green in those terrible HULK movies on television.



THE SCHLOCKETEER

I saw **THE ROCKETEER** and it confirms that the Disney company can take a good story and fuck it up royally. The film has some great stunt work and the actors do what they can with the glib lines stuck in their mouths, but for a fantasy to work it has to remain credible within its own framework and **ROCKETEER** does not. Where a few well placed shots would be effective, the Disney hacks throw in a chorus of gangsters and FBI shooters armed with Thompson submachine guns and the result is as ridiculous in this film as it was in the **DICK TRACY** bomb. Even an 8-year-old kid knows the FBI would cover the back entrance of a house. Give us a break.

The film is ironic from beginning to end, particularly for those who are politically and historically aware. Nazi rocketry was assimilated into the United States military-industrial complex at the end of WW2 and it served as the basis for the development of the missiles which were recently used to destroy a third world country. As for the rocket backpack worn by the Rocketeer, it looks great onscreen, but one can't help noticing that young Cliff would have barbecued his asshole every time he took off. Even if he had worn asbestos slacks [which would have been so heavy he couldn't even stand up in them], you can bet that he would never reproduce his kind after having his chestnuts baked in that rocket stream. The gimmick appeared back in an episode of Buck Rogers and was used in one of the early James Bond films.

THE ROCKETEER is set in 1938 and ranks as a super pot boiler. The writers threw in everything that came along. One must note that the heroines in 1938 adventure movies were usually blonde, not brunette. In '38, brunettes were the heavies. Dale Arden was a blonde and so was Flash Gordon. The Disney problem is overkill. Too much of everything too fast. When the second plane crashes into the second gas truck, it's **TERMINATOR** flashback. I suggest the entire company sit down and watch **DOCTOR NO** again. I enjoyed the flying action, but hated the random vandalism.

ROCKETEER even has the heroine play most of her scenes with the villain [Tim "James Bond" Dalton]!

The early comic book stories were much better, thanks to Dave Stevens. Those little toy figures are too shitty to discuss. Worse than the Dick Tracy junk. A long boooooo to the marketeers. C.G.

A NEW FERLINGHETTI BIOGRAPHY

There was a poetry revival in the early 1950's and one of the seminal figures in this renaissance was Lawrence Ferlinghetti, who founded City Lights Books in 1953 with Pete Martin. So what has this got to do with underground comix? Well, Ferlinghetti was one of the first to sell them in his store and he was one of the first busted when one of the brain police looked between the covers of **ZAP** and found Crumb's put-on about Joe Blow. No conviction and for years underground comix were on the shelf next to the alley so one could look at the latest Crumbic madness and see who came and went from Vesuvius's

at the same time. That alley was renamed for Jack Kerouac in 1978. If you want to wallow a bit in Beatific nostalgia, check out Barry Silesky's biography of **FERLINGHETTI** (Warner Books, 1991). I found this to be a pleasant and accurate portrait of the poet who was certainly an influence on my generation. I was a college student when Beat was the going trend in San Francisco's North Beach and I doubt if there was a single weekend that I didn't spend a couple of hours hanging around City Lights with my friends. Shig Murau was at the front counter, but Ferlinghetti was often in the store or in a nearby coffee house. I hate a number of conversations with him during the time I was a reporter for the Los Angeles **FREE PRESS** and I remember him as friendly and congenial. The last time I saw him in person he was walking across the parking lot at Fort Mason. One of Benny Bufano's statues had fallen on the asphalt and Ferlinghetti was looking at it when the camera stopped his image for a moment.

Ferlinghetti began to publish small pocket sized books of poetry early in the fifties and I bought and read most of the early ones, Allen Ginsberg's **HOWL**, Mike McClure's **Beast** poetry, Ferlinghetti's own **PICTURES OF THE GONE WORLD**, and numerous others which I still have, collector that I am. Beat was the street style at the time, young students wearing black and being cool, but Ferlinghetti was never a fashion trendy. I saw the same ironies in his poetry that were later to appear in the panels of Crumb.

North Beach is now a gentrified hangout for affluent businesspeople, but City Lights is still there. You know it's 1991 by the metal detector next to the front counter. c.g.

BUSHWHACKING IN THE NINETIES

And speaking of the Brain Police, I see those worthies raided a porno theater in Sarasota, Florida, in late July and busted Paul Reubens for whacking off in the privacy of his own row. Paul is better known as Pee-wee Herman and he told the upholders of public morality his real name! The penalty for this terrible crime against nature and the citizenry is 60 days or a \$500 fine. Local papers are running articles advising parents how to explain Peewee's bust to their kids. Expect the straight media to have a party destroying Peewee's rep. My God, he actually smoked a joint when he was eighteen!

Florida has got to be an incredible place. This is where the 2 Live Crew got busted for doing their show and just last week a couple of people were having sex in the privacy of their own apartment when a neighbor sneaked up and video taped their activity through the blinds. Now any rational person would have expected this peeping tom to be busted and thrown in the slam, but not in Florida. No, the police busted the couple! Do they bug the computers in the video rental outlets? Keep lists of those who rent **DEBBIE DOES DALLAS**? Have they got peepholes in the hotel rooms? A friend tells me the state is very big on wet t-shirt contests [for women only], but simulated orgasm contests are a no-no.

CHOP STRIPS

I get both the San Francisco **CHRONICLE** and the Oakland **TRIBUNE** these days so I see two versions of the Sunday comic strips. I always thought they were the same, but lo and behold on July 28, 1991, a friend of mine showed me Lynn Johnson's **FOR BETTER OR WORSE** and two panels had been edited from her Sunday in the **CHRONICLE**! What kind of crap is this? You don't chop up a cartoonist's work like that. It's bad enough that the **TRIBUNE** cuts costs by reducing the comics, but for some editor to decide how a cartoonist's strip will be seen is bullshit. The **TRIB** cuts up **DOONESBURY** and runs the panels down the right side of a page, not it might come as a surprise to the editor who commits this atrocity, but a cartoonist thinks of a Sunday page as an overall image and a panel is usually drawn to relate to the one next to it. Try to imagine any page of **LITTLE NEMO IN SLUMBERLAND** being chopped up and laid out differently. Impossible. You wouldn't believe how small Gary Larson's **FAR SIDE** panel is in the daily **TRIBUNE**. We have to read it with a magnifying glass! c.g.

What if movie titles were long?

THE MAN WHO MIGHT HAVE KNOWN TOO MUCH BUT DIDN'T BECAUSE HIS TRAIN WAS LATE AND HE COULDN'T GET A CAB

THE MAN IN THE DOUBLE-BREADED PEN-STRIPED GREY SUIT WITH THE PEARL BUTTONS AND THE SLIGHTLY PINKISH LINING.

S. Clay Wilson's newest show is at the La Luz de Jesus Gallery, 7400 Melrose Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90046. Toxic Icons will run August 2-31. Call 213-651-4875 for info.

I saw the novel, which at my maturity was the strongest and supplest medium for conveying thought and emotion from one human being to another, was becoming subordinated to a mechanical and communal art that, whether in the hands of Hollywood merchants or Russian idealists, was capable of reflecting only the tritest thought, the most obvious emotion. It was an art in which words were subordinate to images, where personality was worn down to the inevitable low gear of collaboration. As long past as 1930, I had a hunch that the talkies would make even the best-selling novelist as archaic as silent pictures.

--F. Scott Fitzgerald.

The need of people to act out their power agendas often overwhelms more serious needs. That's why the university is not a very efficient place. We now let graduate students sit in on faculty meetings, and they are often amazed by what they see. They expect that because these people have tenure, they'll be secure, but what they find is that they're very petty and focused on trivialities.

--Robin Lakoff



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EL VIBORA SUMMER SPECIAL, a double issue numbers 138, 139. \$10 pp from J. M. Berengueuer, Plaza Beatas 3, Barcelona, Spain. Adults only. Always include an age statement when you order sex comix. Our culture allows children to have any kind of violent comic, but we still live under the shadow of colonial puritanism. The current regular issue of **EL VIBORA** is \$9 pp. A spanish translation of Crumb's **MODE O'DAY** stories is in the works.

ANTI-SOCIAL TERRORIST 2 is \$3.50 pp from Tom Roberts, 333 S. East Avenue, #209, Oak Park, IL 60302.

Robert Pasternak's **Acid-Man 16** is 75¢/stamp from Clay Geerdes, Box 7094, Berkeley, CA 94707. **Acid-Man 17** is \$1.50 pp., a 16 page mini.

May 9, 1960. The first oral contraceptive, developed by the G. D. Searle Company, was approved by the FDA. The existence of this birth control pill is a major factor in the history of this decade. Haight-Ashbury would have been a very different place without Enovid and LSD [lysergic acid diethylamide].

Fans of police activity in Berkeley might enjoy reading a copy of **COPWATCH**. Send \$2 to 2022 Blake Street, Berkeley, CA 94704 for a rundown on the latest cops and protestors action. If you have been following the story of People's Park since 1969, you'll enjoy this publication.

I wouldn't judge or condemn work purely because it's misogynistic or racist or anything else; I would judge and condemn it on whether it was interesting or boring, whether it was honest and truthful and real, or whether it was just somebody attempting to pander to some market they think is out there—somebody trying to be successful, or whatever, instead of saying what's really on their minds, dredging up what's really in there. If it's really in there, it ought to come out on paper. Better that it comes out on paper than to repress it and let it squeeze out in some rageful, angry act in the world. I never believed, and I've said this thousands of times, that drawing something in a comic book is very dangerous or harmful as far as influencing people's behavior.

—Robert Crumb, 1991.

You Crumb collectors who may not be watching **THE COMICS JOURNAL** will have to get #143. It has an interview with Crumb and the cover is reprinted from an early issue of **GOTHIC BLIMPWORKS**. I loved Gary Groth's rationalization of porn. Since he has become one of the major publishers of comic book porn through his Eros line, Gary has to retract a lot of those nasty things he used to say about underground comix in his **NOSTALGIA JOURNAL**. Crumb is very candid in the interview, but will probably regret a lot of his comments later. One can only express that type of honesty at the expense of family and friends. Since a lot of the readers of TCJ are well under age, I suspect Groth is going to receive a lot of mail from outraged mothers over this issue which is not marked **ADULTS ONLY** on the cover. Illustrated writing about pornography which is illustrated with pornographic drawings must qualify as pornography.

The following comix are available from Yendie Boox, POB 18697, Indianapolis, IN 46218: Three minicomix—I WAS A HORNY MUTANT'S SEX TOY #1 [\$1.50], ROGER FNORD: SEX-CRAZED TIME TRAVELER [\$1.50], and TEEN MUTANT SEX SCRAPBOOK [\$1.25]. Two mags with color covers about YENDIE WILDCRITTER: LITTLE MONSTER WITH ATTITUDE. \$3.50 ea. pp. Adults only. Age statement required.

SOLUS 1 has a nice picture of the late Dave Sheridan in it and #2 has what might be a nude shot of Clara Bow on the back page. You can get both these from Steve Mowrey, 155 Grosvenor, Athens, OH 45701. \$5 and a couple of stamps.

ACTORS

Actors have a tough time of it. I feel for them. They can't age as the rest of us do. They are condemned to see themselves much larger than life and to live in the public eye. To see oneself on the giant screen is to see every flaw magnified a thousand times. That first wrinkle looks like a fold in the drapery. Moles or other facial imperfections are monstrous. The actor cannot escape. He is his image. Everywhere he goes he is one of the visible people in contrast to the rest of us. We are free to walk the streets in comfortable anonymity, to sit in coffeehouses and think out own thoughts sans the stares and whispers. It's such a funny business acting. I was associated with a couple of theaters some years ago and I became accustomed to actors and their psychological problems. To be is to be seen. Actors need to exhibit themselves, but they want to do this within the safe camouflage of a role. It is not the actor onstage, but Hamlet. If everyone is after an actor, he is successful and on top of it economically, but he is likely to say he has no privacy. Why can't they leave me alone? I'm eating my dinner, for Christ's sake! This is no time to ask for an autograph. If, on the other hand, the actor was sitting in a restaurant and everyone ignored him, he would wonder why no one was looking. Don't they know who I am? If an actor is treated like any other customer, he is likely to jump on the host for not recognizing him and giving him his due. The truth is most actors are not recognized on the street. Like all of us, they are known in context. Few people recognized Marilyn Monroe when she went shopping in her sweats and sunglasses. People know the movie image, not the person. These days television personalities are far more likely to be recognized publicly than those from the movies.

But then American society, literary or lay, tends to be humorless. What other culture could have produced someone like Hemingway and not seen the joke?

—Gore Vidal

What do you know when you hear a car alarm go off at two in the morning? You know a Yuppie has infiltrated your neighborhood, one for whom a car is more important than his or her neighbor's peace of mind. Yups never understand why no one calls the police when their expensive cars are vandalized or stolen. Fact is, most people consider such a thief a hero, one who has liberated them from the noise. The car alarm is one of the biggest rip-offs of the nineties. They go off all the time and no one pays a bit of attention, least of all your average pro car popper who can smash the windshield and be in and out of the car in less than two minutes. Kids love to skateboard down the hill here in Berkeley setting off car alarms as they go. All it takes is a slight bump and the neighbors are treated to hours of noise.

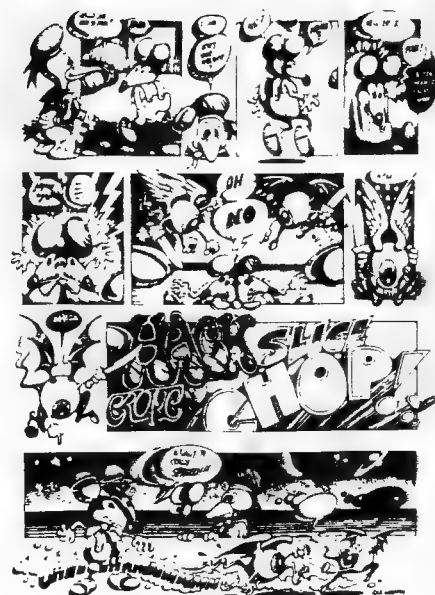
ZIPPY

"HOW TO PICK UP A SURREALIST"

BILL GRIFFITH



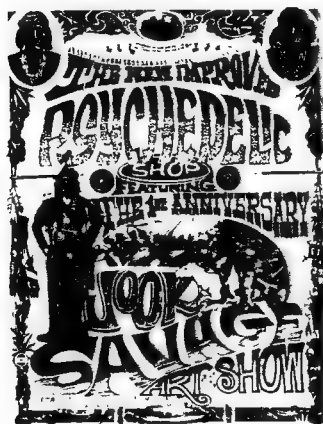
Penguin Books has just released Bill Griffith's new collection of **ZIPPY. FROM A TO ZIPPY** is \$12.95 at your local comic store. Bill is a former underground cartoonist now syndicated by King Features.



Rick Griffin

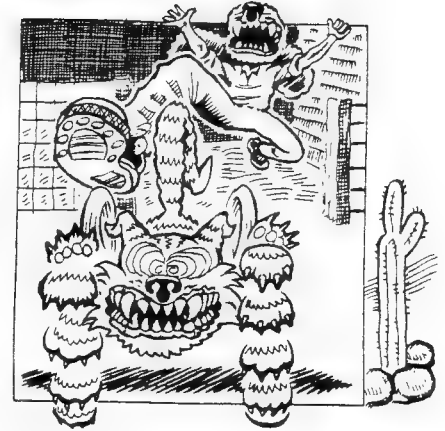
[June 18, 1944-August 17, 1991]

Thrown from his Harley trying to pass a van in Petaluma, California, on Thursday, August 15, 1991. Rick Griffin died at Santa Rosa Memorial Hospital two days later. Born in Los Angeles, his early love was surfing. Earliest cartoons appeared in *SURFER* magazine. These were reprinted in *TALES OF THE TUBE*. Did Hot Rod cartoons and Surftoons for Big Daddy Roth. Designed dance posters for Fillmore and Avalon in late sixties and was partially responsible for the unique look of the period. His lettering influenced many. His company was known as Berkeley Bonaparte. Did album covers for the Grateful Dead and designed the logo of the Rolling Stones. His work appeared in *MAN FROM UTOPIA*, *GOSPEL OF ST. JOHN*, and numerous underground comix. He was one of the ZAP gang from #2 on. See his work in *SNATCH*, *YELLOW DOG* 2 and 8, *BOGEYMAN* 2 and 3, *KING BEE*, *SAN FRANCISCO COMIC BOOK* 2 and others. He was associated with the San Francisco *ORACLE* for a short time and did an Indian cover and a pull-out poster which epitomized the Haight-Ashbury period. Griffin loved to assimilate American trademarks and images into his work and was strongly influenced by the *MAD* work of Bill Elder. His incorporation of Archie in a drawing printed in an issue of *YELLOW DOG* stimulated the usual lawsuit threat from John Goldwater. Griffin's art may be seen in any of several collections of Haight-Ashbury poster art as well as in recent books about the Grateful Dead and The Rolling Stones.





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COMIX PLUGOLA

Congratulations to **Brad and Cindy Foster**. They were married the 14th of September in Arlington, Texas.

You can get **DOUBTS AND VISIONS 1** for \$1.50 pp from Ben Adams, 1305 Ea. Denny Way, #107, Seattle, WA 98122.

The Owl Gallery, 465 Powell Street, San Francisco, CA, 415-781-5464 will feature the animation art of **Friz Freleng**, the creator of Yosemite Sam and the Pink Panther, through October 19th.

CEREBUS 63-65 have been reprinted and are available at your local comic dealer.

"... a country's true liberty, its sense of freedom, the gas it its proverbial tank if you will, could in some ways be measured by the ability of its citizenry to get naked and dance around for hard currency."

Steve Lafler

Steve is co-publisher with Stephen Beaupre of **BUZZARD**, and the 4th issue is now on the stands with a great cover by Mary Fleener. Contributors include J. R. Williams, Roy Tompkins, Mario Hernandez, Dave Cherry, Julie Doucet, and Ken Brown.

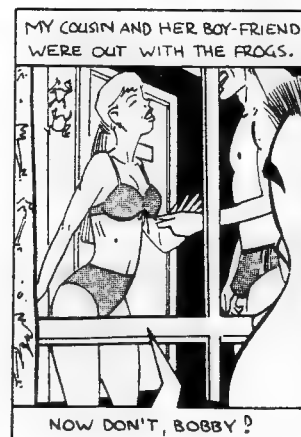
SHOOTY BEAGLE who began his career in a newave comic a couple of years back continues his career in **SHOOTY BEAGLE 3** from Fantagraphics. The artwork is by Greg Budgett and Gary Dumm whose work I saw for the first time in Pekar's **AMERICAN SPLENDOR** [#16 of that title just out.]. Shooty and Dog Boy have a lot in common, namely human women. Bestiality continues to run rampant these days with Disney Comics in the lead. At the top of the Disney line is **ROGER RABBIT**, a comic in which a human [though cartoon] woman is married to a cloddish rabbit. Their sex life occurs off-panel. Not so with Shooty and Dog Boy.

So a note to those cartoonists into bestiality—the Canadian censors are out to get you. Couple of years back I wrote a

quasi-serious essay on animal and human sex for one of the American sex mags and it was rejected by an editor who told me that anything about bestiality got stopped at the Canadian border. Made me wonder how they dealt with Crumb's stuff. Or Reed Waller's Omaha or...

Reed Waller did a nice story called "Heat Loss" for Fantagraphics' **REAL GIRL**, billed as a sex comic for all genders and orientations. No animal sex in this one. Actually, the only thing animal about Waller's Omaha, one of our longest running soap op comics, is the faces and tails.

Panels shown are from **BUZZARD**, **SHOOTY BEAGLE**, and **REAL GIRL**.



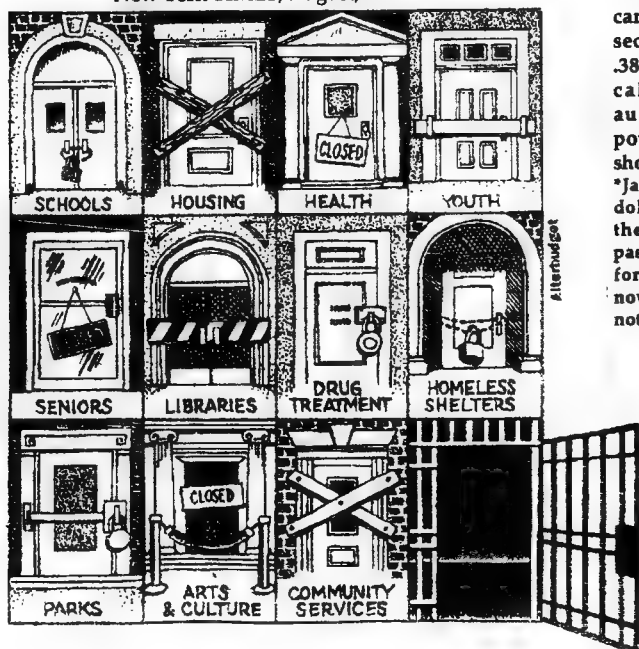
The single force that has helped change the mood of pop music from warm to cold, from human to mechanical, from song-oriented to image-oriented has been the technological revolution of the last half century that brought high fidelity and television to the masses.

The bigger-is-better mystique of technology has coincided with and fostered the macho ethic that has increasingly taken over pop since World War II and made *beautiful* a negative adjective reserved for ultraconservative music radio.

As the volume of pop has increased, hard rhythm has chopped up the traditional narrative song and turned it into a tribal shout. Rap, which dispenses with melody altogether, is the latest manifestation of the trend. Given the intensity of pop beats, the only way that story-telling could be perpetuated in pop without sacrificing those crucial beats was by giving up melody. Much of rap is really punk propelled by hard-funk rhythms and charged with anger over urban blight and social inequity. In laying out the brutal facts, it pulls away the protective masks of melody and a pretty voice the better to assert itself, and uses music as a tool of social assault.

Although the temptation is to blame outside forces for the deteriorating condition of pop, today's sound—like other major modern inventions, from the automobile to nuclear power—is something we created for ourselves. And like other technological innovations, it has its hazards. Deafening electronic feedback, for instance, is a kind of aesthetic toxic waste, since it can literally destroy hearing. And even though the shriek and clatter of pop records can be stimulating, it is also the musical corollary to junk food. Saddest of all is the fact that this music is inescapably an aural reflection of the material and spiritual world we inhabit. It is out collective chatter and romance of youth. And it has never sounded meaner, more aggressive, more denying of beauty, and more devoid of sensitivity, thought and feeling than it does today.

Stephen Holden
New York TIMES, August, 1990.



HOW THE OTHER HALF LIVES

The security system at Jasna Polana* is strictly James Bond. All mail and packages are examined for explosives, cars are searched, every phone call goes to a central switchboard and is screened. Three logs are kept: a vehicle log, a phone log, and an activity log. The windows in the house are bulletproof glass. Two Johnson children remember their father telling them that in case of attack they were to run into the pool area because it would be sealed off from the rest of the house. Every resident of the estate is assigned a security number, employees have time cards, activities are monitored at all times by cameras in the trees and in plastic bubbles mounted throughout the house and grounds. There are electronic beams, sensors underground and under the floors and carpets within the house, panic alarm systems, and emergency telephone. These devices are tied to a central computer in a security room, where a staff of twelve security men monitors the cameras twenty-four hours a day. In the security department there is an arsenal of .38 caliber revolvers, .357 magnums, .45 caliber automatics, 9-millimeter automatics, M-16s and other high-powered rifles with scopes, 12-gauge riot shotguns.

*Jasna Polana is the name of a 30 million dollar estate built by Seward Johnson of the Johnson and Johnson company. It passed into the hands of his wife, Basia, a former Polish maid, upon his death. She now has the pleasure of living there. [my note. CG]

—Barbara Goldsmith
JOHNSON V. JOHNSON

In the end, each life is no more than the sum of contingent facts, a chronicle of chance intersections, of flukes, of random events that divulge nothing but their own lack of purpose.

—Paul Auster
THE LOCKED ROOM, 1984.

When Carol Kalish died of a heart attack in September, the COMIC BUYER'S GUIDE (Sept. 27) featured several pages of memorial ads for Carol, a few of them full pages. In the same issue was a short obituary for Rick Griffin by Craig Yoe and not a single memorial. There is a message there. I know Carol Kalish worked in the comics industry. I met her at Marvel's display at the San Diego Con a couple of years ago. That she was valued by the industry is evident from the testimonials in CBG, but Carol was not an artist and artists are the heart and soul of comics, not businesspeople. It disturbs me that I never see testimonial ads for artists. I understand full well the reasons why I don't see them, but I don't like it any better because of that understanding. The ads cost money and the industry and the distributors and the comic book stores have the money and it's clear they will spend it on an executive but not on a factory worker, not on an artist. Rick Griffin's death isn't even front page news in CBG. It's on page 22. Well, that's logical. Rick was a great artist, but he wasn't one of them; he was an underground artist, one of us.

Well, you can bet your ass the industry isn't going to run any memorial pages for their own bullpen workers either. You've read those back page obits for the great cartoonists who have passed on as well as I have. Filler between the ads, no memorials.

No art, no industry!

Most of what passes for education in the United States deadens the desire for learning because it fails to awaken the student to the unique value of his or her own mind. If the public schools employ the devices of overcrowded classrooms, recitations by rote, questions shaped to the simple answer of right or wrong, it is because the society regards the realm of thought as a subversive conspiracy likely to cause nothing but trouble. An inept and insolent bureaucracy armed with badly written textbooks instills in the class the attitudes of passivity, compliance, and boredom. The students major in the arts of failure and the science of diminished expectations.

Lewis Lapham, HARPER'S, July, 1991.

A woman in a classroom, as a figure of authority, is in a double bind. One, you have to be nurturant and understanding, or you'll be seen as cold, uncaring, and unsympathetic. There's no neutrality as men have. At the same time, in order to get respect, because of the rules of academia, you have to be cold and distant and authoritative. You cannot possibly be both. Male students tend to critique in terms of your intellectual style, while women students often want more from you emotionally than you can possibly give them.

—Robin Lakoff





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Congratulations to Brad and Cindy Foster. They were married the 14th of September in Arlington, Texas.

Dave Sim's CEREBUS continues. See your local dealer for the latest issues.

Higashi no kaze ame.

You can get DOUBTS AND VISIONS 1 for \$1.50 pp from Ben Adams, 1305 Ea. Denny Way, #107, Seattle, WA 98122.

David Boyle has done a nice mini-comic he calls MAGPIE 1. It's \$1/stamp from 5294 Tobin St., #12, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada B3H 1S2.

Would you believe a minicomic adaptation of James Joyce's ULYSSES? A buck from David L. Lasky, 2831 Hogan Ct., Falls Church, VA 22043. Nice art and never boring. I found parts of Joyce interesting in my college days, but whole sections of ULYSSES are so tedious and convoluted... Lasky wants to do a magazine. Ask for his flyer.

EL VIBORA 140 is \$10 pp from J. M. Berengueuer, Plaza Beatas 3, Barcelona, Spain. Reprints Crumb's adaptation of Sartre's LA NAUSEE in Spanish. Adults.

You can see a very nice picture of Molly Ringwald's lips in the current issue of Joe Bob Briggs' WE ARE THE WEIRD. I enjoyed that along with JB's rap about his various addictions and his review of the renaissance faires. Worth two bucks. POB 2002, Dallas, TX 75221.

For you people who sit and argue about whether Dreyer's or Ben and Jerry's is the best ice cream, the two are partners. Same company.

PROPAGANDA WAR 10 is available for a stamp from Clark Dissmeyer, POB 1531, Kearney, NE 68818.

BILL GRAHAM [1931-1991]

Bill Graham died with his boots on. He was on his way back to Corte Madera in his helicopter and crashed into a power pole near Vallejo, California. He had just seen Huey Lewis and The News at the Concord Pavilion. He was 60. I never knew Graham personally, but I saw him many times over the years. He got into the rock and roll business more by accident than anything else. I was at the Fillmore when Bill put together a benefit for what was called the Artists' Liberation Front in 1965. There were actors there from The Committee, San Francisco Mime Troupe [with whom Graham worked for a while], and a lot of sixties groups that have long dropped out of the limelight. Allen Ginsberg and Michael McClure were there. People seem to have forgotten that there was more of an artistic community in Haight-Ashbury and music was only a part of it, not the essence. I saw Mike McClure read his poetry at the Fillmore. I saw Lenny Bruce perform there. I saw plays like McClure's THE BEARD in which Jean Harlow met Billy the Kid in Eternity. I saw groups like The Fugs and The PH Factor Jug Band and The Cleanliness and Godliness Skiffle Band.

A Biography of Thorne Smith

I have finished and desktop published a few copies of my biography of James Thorne Smith, the creator of TOPPER.

The book runs 140 pages and includes a bibliography of Smith and a fairly complete list of secondary references. Those interested in the life and literary career of this neglected humorist may get a copy of THORNE SMITH: AMERICA'S FORGOTTEN HUMORIST from me. \$20 postpaid. Signed on request. Box 7094, Berkeley, CA 94707.

-Clay Geerdes.

BABY SUE goes on being a nasty foulmouthed little girl in the latest issue [v. 3, #2] and you can suffer all this invective for \$2. POB 1111, Decatur, GA 30031-1111. Back issues available.

Jim Strauss and Emilie Cunningham sent me a copy of their tabloid, COMIC RELEASE. Strips and stuff. They print stuff, so some of you cartoonists might want to check them out. Send a buck for a sample copy. POB 20661, Seattle, WA 98102.

CITY LIMITS GAZETTE is coming out every two weeks now, says Steve Willis, and the latest has a nice rap with Shary Flenniken within. Send a buck and get a sample. POB 390, McCleary, WA 98557-0390.

ACID MAN SOCIETY 18 is 50¢/stamp from CW, POB 7094, 94707. Age statement required on this one. Over 21 only.

The focus was not at all on rock and roll music, indeed, some of the groups were a lot closer to folk and country than they were to rock. Bill Graham, never a racist, booked all the major black performers he could find and it was a real trip to see black and white bands playing together on the same stage. You didn't see that very often.

After the ALF benefit, Graham continued to book shows at the Fillmore and they were always a lot of fun. Bill had everything there from free balloons and lollipops to free chalk for people to draw pictures on the floor. He had strobe lights and movie projectors and while the bands played onstage there was always a light show. The Fillmore was an environment and what went on there was more closely related to an art happening than a simplistic rock dance. Graham was always there to announce the bands, talk to people, clean up, whatever. At the end of every evening when we were filing out the door onto Fillmore Street he would be there in the checkout booth handing us a poster for the next week's show. These posters now go for a lot of bucks to private collectors and not a few of them went up in flames in the recent fire in the Oakland Hills.

I know Graham was a tough businessman and a survivor in a nasty business and I have heard a lot of negative things about him, but I never had to deal with him in that way. When I was writing for the Los Angeles FREE PRESS, I used to stop in his office once in awhile and he was always friendly to me. There are people who are down on Graham because he made it big, but if you subtract Graham from what has happened in music in the past twenty years, what do you come up with? He managed and got top dollar for a lot of musicians who were playing small clubs for peanuts before he came along.

Graham is owed by all of those who value the poster art. He recognized the talents of many young artists who came to the Bay Area in the late sixties and gave them a medium for expressing that talent.

Bill Graham died on October 25, 1991, and his funeral on October 28, 1991, was attended by many of the now famous and notorious. -Clay Geerdes

CRUMB IN FRANCE

There is a retrospective of the art of Robert Crumb currently on tour in Europe. It will be shown at the 19th Annual Comic Salon in Angoulême, France.

The Festival runs from January 23-27 in the National Center for Comics and Images, but Crumb's art will remain on display through March. A life-sized status of a Vulture Demoness is being constructed under Crumb's supervision for the occasion. The retrospective will move to Barcelona, Spain in the Spring, then to Harleem, Netherlands, and over to Berlin in Germany. Information is available from Jean-Pierre Mercier, Comics Festival, 121 Route de Bordeaux, 16,000 Angoulême, France. I suspect there will be a poster and program book about which collectors will wish to query. No doubt some of our local dealers will have a few, Bud Plant perhaps.



SO LONG, UNCA WALT!

Well, I don't agree with the current analysis of the fall of Disney comics. I think the company has acted in bad faith since the beginning by pricing the comics out of the kid market [\$1.50 is *not* what a parent is going to spend for a comic book, particularly one that is full of house ads for Disney products, hence more of a catalog than a comic book in the first place.]. by exploiting foreign artists, and, basically, forgetting about what Disney has always stood for. I'm not surprised that **MICKEY MOUSE** didn't sell in the millions and I don't see why the company is. Most adults are sick of the character and their kids could care less. Today's five-year-old can name all four Ninja Turtles and knows all about Super Mario and, while he recognizes Mickey Mouse from all the tv ads, he doesn't really care about him. The little kids love Raphael or Michaelangelo. The people I talk to who are into Mickey are much older and the Mickey they like is definitely not the character who appeared in the recent run, but the one styled for the cartoons by Ub Iwerks and drawn in strip form for 45 years by Floyd Gottfredson. The new Mickey simply could not compete in today's kid market. How could he? I analyzed the first story in a previous issue of CW and believe me the plot was far beyond any five-year-old.

Now I am hearing that the guys who run Disney are going to concentrate on producing comic books aimed at the collector market. What kind of crap is that? What collector market? I've seen this organized collector hustle gathering speed since the early seventies and one thing is certain--almost none of the books that come out with collector's item plastered across the cover is worth the cover price let alone worth speculating. What is **HOWARD THE DUCK** 1 worth? How about **SHAZAM** 1? Come on, you guys, stop hustling the kids. Do something honest for a change. In a few years this whole comic hustle is going to come crashing down around your ears. Early forties issues of **WALT DISNEY'S COMICS AND STORIES** are collectable because they are truly rare

and hard to come by. Today's comics with their huge print runs and mass distribution aren't going to be worth as much as the mylar bags they are stored in a few years down the line. Hell, every kid in town has the same box of the same X-TURDS in the same plastic bags in the same acid-free box.

The fate of Roger Rabbit is significant. Here is a character done by committee, one of the silliest in the history of the medium. Like everything done by the product-oriented bottomliners at contemporary Disney, the character was hyped to death before anyone had seen him on film and when he did appear in the mallplexes he came on like a sledgehammer. Roger was just plain stupid and kids do not identify with stupidity. They want to be hip, not dumb. What kid could identify with Roger's continual pratfalls and his duh-duh stumblebum nature? That stuff went down the tubes with music hall comedy. The less said for that little asshole Baby Herman, the better. Talk about a character who should have been drowned in the inkwell at conception. Who cared if Roger saved him in those repetitive Averagesque cartoons? I was hoping the little shit would fall off screen and disappear after the first couple of swiped gags. And I was right about Roger. He didn't survive. For all the Disney hype, he was a failure in the comic stores and his titles have been dumped. Talk about fidelity to the collector market!

What bugs me about Disney is that the company is super successful and doesn't have to use the cons of the toy companies that are now commissioning comic books and tv series that are nothing but ads for their dolls and games. They don't have to do the Care Bears and He-man shit, so why are they doing it? Disney's comic division could afford to do some experimental stuff, to buy some interesting funny animal art from different cartoonists and let it stand on its own. Why does everything the company produces have to look just alike? Why not let some of that insipid cuteness rest in peace with Walt in his crypt? Why not subsidize some young cartoonists and take a loss once in awhile? Put something back instead of being so damned greedy.

These days it is possible to distill imaginative ideas into a series of formulae and run them through various forms via computer graphics, but what comes out is usually the same stuff. There are, believe me, more ideas in a single early Barks duck story or Jack Cole Plastic Man than I have seen in most recent issues of stuff like **ROGER RABBIT** or **TAIL SPIN**. As a boy, I always had the feeling that Barks and Cole were playing with me, keeping me guessing, entertaining me at the same time that they were challenging me to keep up with their imaginations. What was and is missing in the studio produced art running in the latest Disney comic books is the personality of a Barks or a Cole. Now bear in mind that I had no idea who Barks was in 1945 because his name was never on the stories, but I knew him anyway, even when he was drawing Barney Bear or Porky Pig. He managed to manifest himself through the art and those who are simply tracing and redrawing his ideas today can never do that. They are what they are, factory workers turning out product for so much a page. There is no love in their work and

very little interest. They have the technical expertise, but not the creativity.

Whenever I think of Disney, I can't help but remember Disney suing Dan O'Neill's Hell Comics for "tarnishing the Disney image" by breathing some new life into what had become incredibly sedate and predictable cartoon characters. Disney won easily. Corporate power always wins the battle against the artist in America. But Walt, who died in 1966, never knew anything about this lawsuit and I've always wished that Walt could have seen those great pages O'Neill and his Air Pirates drew in 1970, because I think he would have laughed his head off. For all his pretensions to highbrow culture [*Fantasia*, for example], Walt was a Kansas boy with a low brow sense of humor.

I don't think many of the lower echelon execs at Disney would understand humor if it jumped out of their computer monitors into their laps. Hey, I saw that **ROGER RABBIT** movie in a mallplex filled with kids one afternoon after it came out in 1988 and I didn't hear one single laugh, not one! There's a message there.

When I was a boy, we looked forward to the new issue of **Walt Disney's Comics and Stories**. It was always filled with good stuff and it cost a dime. 64 pages. Carl Barks had many stories in there from 1943 on. We looked forward to the cartoons and to the features that came out about every two or three years after **SNOW WHITE** in 1937. The Disney stuff was a treat from C&S to Gottfredson's strip in the papers. Uncle Scrooge McDuck was great, but he was always kept in check by Donald and his nephews. He was every bit the greedy capitalist, but he never got out of control. Today he has taken control of the Disney empire and there are no checks on him. He has lost that trace of human feeling that always redeemed him in Barks' stories.

I don't think Walt Disney would be very happy to see the direction his company has taken in the nineties. Anyone who has read the early material on EPCOT knows that Walt had in mind something a lot different from what now exists down in Florida.





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IN MEMORY OF DR. SEUSS

I was out in Balboa Park in San Diego with David Miller back in 1983 and we saw the Cat in the Hat in the distance so we headed toward him. Turned out to be a museum showing of the art of Dr. Seuss, the definite highlight for me of that trip. We were in San Diego for the comic convention which was even then segueing into the giant trade show it has since become. We went to the exhibit and saw not only the early political cartoons of Theodore Seuss Geisel but many of his giant paintings as well.

That show was important to me and this newsletter, because I had been getting bored with it at that point and was thinking of retiring. I had said what I had to say about underground comix and they had drifted into the inevitable repetition that is the fate of comic strips and books that continue over too long a period, so it was either find a new direction or unplug my word processor and find something legitimate to do with my time. Seeing Dr. Seuss' show changed all of that. I reviewed it, wrote him a note, got a lovely reply, and started a long series of articles on children's literature that kept this letter alive.

Dr. Seuss died on Tuesday, September 24, 1991, at his home in La Jolla, California. He began his long career as a children's poet and cartoonist in 1937 with the publication of *IT ALL HAPPENED ON MULBERRY STREET*. His career is well documented in the libraries and I won't reiterate his accomplishments here. Suffice to say, I loved his imaginative art and have been fortunate enough to enjoy it all over again through the eyes of my best friend's grandson who is now a great fan of Dr. Hooper Bloob. C.G.

Babies are born with a sense of fairness, justice, morality, and a great capacity for kindness and forbearance, and it is sheer disappointment in the character and nature of parent and world that changes this eager infant into a murderous teenager. Some survive, of course; time heals a few wounds, wounds a few heels. The teenager gets older, encounters some nicer, more controlled, more kindly people than he or she ever found at home--most people behave worst in their own homes--and with any luck comes to understand, yes, there is an aspiration or so floating around out there, and, if he, she, hasn't seen too many horror movies, been too beaten up in body and mind, regains a little faith in a world at least potentially redeemable.

—Fay Weldon
DARCYS UTOPIA, 1990



You realize how time has passed when you have to tell someone what a Deadhead is. That happened to me the other day when there was a story in the local college paper about a Deadhead who woke up to find a strange head in her uncovered lap doing uninvited things to her bleep. The intruder ran out of the room and escaped but the Deadhead and her boy friend and some others found the abuser on Telegraph Avenue and beat him up. Police arrested him for possession and sexual assault and he's in the slam awaiting his fate.

Oh, a Deadhead is a head who follows the Dead, a head being someone who believes in taking LSD as a sacrament and the Dead being the Grateful Dead. If you're under forty, you probably don't even understand the patois of the sixties and would need a glossary to read the books about the Dead and the other rock bands that made San Francisco a major music and art center circa 1967. Many people formed tribes or communes in the sixties and began to live like nomads. After a short time, some rejoined mainstream culture, but a significant number continued to live in old painted up school busses, following the Grateful Dead on their concert tours and more or less turning their lives into art. These tribes are often lumped incorrectly with cults. I say this because they are more often secular than religious.

The Deadheads are not liked by straight people, now known as yuppies [always a derogatory term now though it began as a simple acronym for young urban professionals, the lower echelon avant-garde of the growing business clique], and in a polyglot community like Berkeley nary a day passes without some form of culture conflict. At this moment [October 16, 1991], squatters have a tent city on the lot that used to be covered by the Berkeley Inn and there are professional beggars working every corner near the UC campus that dominates the area. The owner of that corner has served the homeless an eviction notice and been flipped off and the city now has to decide just how they will clear the area without another major riot and major trashing of the neighborhood. When the university built a volleyball court on People's Park last January, the cost was nearly half a million dollars and numerous lawsuits. The riots in the area lasted three days and nights as Telegraph became a war zone.

During the Great Depression which lasted throughout the 1930s in this country, thousands of people left the midwest and came to California, many in response to ads circulated by orange growers in search of cheap labor. When they got here, they found police waiting for them. These people were forced to live outside the cities in shanty towns which were called Hoovervilles in honor of President Herbert Hoover. You can read about all of this in detail in John Steinbeck's *THE GRAPES OF WRATH* [or rent the video]. What is interesting is seeing a Hooverville right in the center of what has to be one of the most affluent communities in this part of the country. Let me tell you, with tuition and text and rents so high around here, there are very few poor students at Cal. I sit in the coffee shop drinking my tea and see the down and outs panhandling from students who double park their new sportscars to

stand in line for a quick frozen yogurt fix. The majority of the beggars are black while the new students are most likely to be Asian [34% of the current Freshman class]. The university raised tuition 40% recently, a clear message that Cal is out to become Harvard West. It is also out to assimilate the Berkeley community and stamp out the spirit of protest that was renewed in the early sixties via Civil Rights Activism, the Free Speech Movement, and the movement to stop the illegal war in Viet Nam. A major research arm of the military industrial complex, Cal is building far more laboratories on campus than classrooms. In the face of this continually growing, expanding, corporate-serving bureaucracy, it is not hard to understand how an area like People's Park becomes an ideal and a symbol.

BIG WAITPERSON IS WATCHING YOU!

You would think that the major prime time advertisers who invade more and more of our audio-visual space every second of every day would realize that their infiltration of everything with product images simply emphasizes to the public what greedy egocentric assholes they are. I hate seeing ads in the theaters and on rented videos and when they are built into the film I start to hate the product. I stopped buying various soft drinks when they were associated with singers and actors I liked as a protest and, you know what, I don't miss them at all! I appreciate products that leave me alone.

Speaking of products, we had a little to do here in Berkeley last week that really evolved into theater of the ridiculous. A guy was eating in a local diner and reading an article in *Playboy* and the waitperson [a woman] told him to put his magazine away because it offended her. Well, the guy had the normal reaction, he protested to the manager and got an apology, but after he thought about it he called up *Playboy* and got some free copies of their latest issue and passed them out the following Saturday for a read-in at the restaurant. *Playboy*, naturally, used the whole thing as a commercial and it relieved the boredom of a warless weekend. The waitperson argued that she had a right to work in a pornography free environment and the customer argued that he had a right to read anything he chose, this being America, the land of the First Amendment, blah and blah. When I heard about this, I had several reactions. I thought the guy was pushing it a little, because *Playboy*, however lame it has become as a fashion mag under Christie Hefner's rule, is still what I would consider a stroke book for young boys and not the sort of thing one reads over breakfast in a public diner; at the same time, I am one of those obstinate people who can't stand to have anyone tell me what to do and I know if a waitperson said anything about something I might be reading I would have told the person to fuck off. I stop going places where the employees rub me the wrong way.

What happened that day in front of the diner was absurd, but it was no more typical Berkeley than it was typical Madison or Chicago behavior. I get bugged with this typical Berkeley horseshit the local media people spout. As if they didn't

live here in the Bay Area. Three factions met that day, the people who came down to score a free *Playboy* and save four or five bucks, the free speech folks; the anti-porn feminists, and the various media, a voyeuristic lot who feign objectivity while celebrating everyone else's deviant behavior. A lot of shouting and self-righteousness took place, but the cowardly straight media had to be very careful because some of the feminists were whirling dildoes around and wearing dicknose glasses--can't have anything phallic on the old tube now, can we?

The Our Bodies, Our Selves people have always struck me as a study in contradictory behavior. If a woman is free to do what she wants to do with her body, that is, to abort or have the child, to make all the significant decisions concerning her own life, then who are these women to tell other women they can't make their living modeling or selling sexual paraphernalia or doing whatever else they might choose to do? You're either free to do what you will with your body or you're not. What the anti-porn gang really argues is that women are free to do only certain feministically acceptable things and when they violate neo-Goddess behavior, look out. What it boils down to is that all of us feel we have the right to tell other people how to live. I can't sit in a diner and read anything that might offend the waitperson, which means I am subject to the value system of the person pouring my tea. What if I had been reading *COSMOPOLITAN*? All those young models in their underwear! No offense. That's okay. That's a women's magazine, which is one in which the models are always associated with product, the real exploitation of beauty and youth--in *Playboy*, the models are only themselves.

Women at the read-in tore up copies of *Playboy* and made a big mess which, of course, they didn't bother to clean up, because being able to dictate other people's behavior goes hand in hand with being free to trash the street. People stood nose to nose calling one another various body parts and the evening news got some good footage and nothing was resolved. It never is. I've been watching scenes like this for thirty years and I know there are a lot of people with a theatrical bent who seek out public events for exhibitionistic purposes. They go to protest areas not because they really want to do anything about whatever social evil is being addressed, but because they get off on

yelling at authority figures in public. I suspect more than a few of these people have a permanent mad on for their parents and public outrage is a lot cheaper than private therapy. Protest behavior has become cultic in our time and it is common to see the same people at radically different demonstrations and rallies. Today it's about the right to read a sex mag in a public diner, tomorrow it's about the right to eat a hot dog in a vegetarian restaurant--hey, a few months ago, it was about the right of a woman reporter to interview male football players in their locker room! I got a right. You got a right. Most familiar phrases on the street. Well, remember what Heller said in *CATCH-22*. *Catch-22* says you've got a right to do anything they can't keep you from doing. Gotta go, folks. I'm late for

the big volley ball match between the Women Against Violence in Pornography and Media and the White Aryan Brotherhood. It's a grudge match and let's hope it doesn't turn out to be all volley and no ball. C.G.

Some Far Out Shit, Man, Like...

Nice article on Paleo-scatologist Andrew Jones in *The Wall Street Journal* [September 9, 1991]. Dr. Jones resides in York, England, where he studies fossil's remains. Dr. Jones says the Lloyd's Bank Turd and other specimens reveal clues about the Vikings who occupied York a thousand years ago. He says they were not all war-mongering, ale-swilling rapists. Their fecal remains show that many were communal craftsmen who consumed a healthy, high-fiber diet of grains, fish, seeds and berries. "Hippies," quoth Jones.



We all want to be told stories and we listen to them in the same way we did when we were young. We imagine the real story inside the words, and to do this we substitute ourselves for the person in the story, pretending that we can understand him because we understand ourselves. This is a deception. We exist for ourselves, perhaps, and at times we even have a glimmer of who we are, but in the end we can never be sure, and as our lives go on, we become more and more opaque to ourselves, more and more aware of our own incoherence. No one can cross the boundary into another--for the simple reason that no one can gain access to himself.

—Paul Auster
THE LOCKED ROOM, 1984.

I'M POLITICALLY CORRECT
AND TOTALLY RIGHT
ABOUT EVERYTHING.
AND IF YOU DON'T LIKE
IT, FUCK YOU!!





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THE SEARCH FOR BETTY PAGE

A recent issue of the Valley Edition of the L. A. Weekly featured a long article on the history of Betty Page and her revival as a cult figure in the weird world of comic fandom. People are still trying to find Betty, who would be 68 years old this year, and while I understand why I can't really say I am sympathetic to this quest. What if she were found and agreed to subject herself to the current celebrity marketplace? Can you see Betty as Dave Stevens drew her in the early **ROCKETEER** stories juxtaposed with her current image on the cover of some fanzine? Fact is, Betty did the smart thing when she left New York and disappeared into Florida in the mid-fifties. She knew that a model's career was a short one and she found a life. What's to find?

You know celebrities are human junk food. They are processed and served to an indiscriminate public as easily as soft drinks and they have as little meaning or staying power. Television has made their images so common to everyone that they are taken for granted along with the behavior that is appropriate. What happens when a mallie spots a celeb? An announcement and a request for an autograph and general embarrassment. Truth is, if Betty Page were seen wandering around at a comic convention, most people would assume she was there with her great grandchildren and she'd probably be run over by a stampede of clods trying to get Dave Stevens' autograph on some old Pacific Comic books.

What would Betty say to the fans? For all her charm as a figure model for mags like **TITTER** and **WINK**, she was never on the creative end. She was always an object. Irving Klaw never cared anything about her mind and it's doubtful that any of

the other photographers did either. It was the image of a young Betty that inspired Dave Stevens and other artists. They never knew she had a teaching credential and other aspirations than posing in bathing suits and leather underwear.

Back in 1971 I heard about a show of oldtime vaudeville people that was touring and when I found it was going to play the Orpheum on Market Street in San Francisco I called the agent and arranged to spend some time hanging around the dressing rooms talking to people like Jackie Coogan [the Kid in the Chaplin movie] and Cass Daley and Sally Rand. I was particularly excited about seeing Sally Rand who I remembered from my father's description of her fan dance at the 1933 World's Fair in Chicago. I had seen one picture of her with a giant feather and for me Sally was sex with a capital S. The woman I met that evening in a dilapidated dressing room in the bowels of the Orpheum was 68 years old. She was sick, pretty tired from the strain of dealing with the show, and not even vaguely related to the glossy photograph her agent had given me. At the same time, she was friendly and we had a chat about her life. She had gone back to college and educated herself to become a speech therapist and she was excited about helping children with speech difficulties to make it through the school system. She didn't care any more about the past than most of the older people I have met during my writing career. She said the dancing was a part of her youth. Like many, she had come under the influence of Isadora Duncan and developed the fan and bubble dances. What more was there to say about it? Later that evening she did the original fan dance onstage and the friendly rose lights made her look quite sexy, but I'm sure it was an ordeal she was glad to leave behind at the end of the evening.

So I vote we enjoy the photographs and the art Betty Page has inspired and leave the woman she has become alone. It just might be that her present self hates what her younger self permitted. In 1932, Alice Pleasance Little was awarded an honorary doctorate from Columbia University and she was talked into making the trip from England to accept the award

because she needed the money offered her for the original copy of Lewis Carroll's **ALICE'S ADVENTURES UNDERGROUND**. Alice Little was not being honored for any personal achievement, but for being the child who inspired Carroll [Charles Ludwig Dodgson] to tell and then write down **ALICE'S ADVENTURES IN WONDERLAND**. I'm sure this elderly woman resented and more than likely hated having spent her life associated with a fictional character in a children's book and I suspect Betty Page would find it even less of a reward to be found and presented as a guest at a comic convention. There still isn't anything particularly honorable about posing for bondage or pin-up photographs, however much they appeal to the kinkier among us, and I suspect a religious woman like the current Ms. Page would be upset, outraged, embarrassed, and hardly pleased with the adoration currently directed at her previous sinful self.

Well, I suspect God has forgiven Betty, but I know the fans never will.
C.G.

David Miller has two pages in **WAVEMAKER**, a Canadian comic with a nice cover by Allen Freeman. \$4 pp from Mark Innes, Jackson Sta, POB 57582, Hamilton, Ontario, Canada L8P 4X3.

BUZZ 3 has some strange stuff therein as you can see by the panels displayed. Check it out at your local dealer. \$2.95. "The Adventures of Fetal Elvis" is a real trip through inner space.

CHRONIC IDIOCY is better art than story, but I think you'll enjoy looking at it. It's from Caliber Press, 621-B So. Main St., Plymouth, MI 48170. \$3.25 pp.

Tundra is publishing the last complete work by Vaughn Bodé, **POEM TOONS**. Next January, they will begin serializing the completed **COBALT 60**. Mark Bodé and Larry Todd finished the work.

Don't miss Scott Finley and Brooks Hagan's **BLOOD JUNKIES ON CAPITAL HILL**. If you didn't know the vampires have taken over Washington, you will after you read this comic book. I found it at Comic Relief in Berkeley.

Cerebus 151 begins a new story, mothers & daughters. At your local dealer.

El Vibora 141 is \$10 pp from J. M. Berenguer, Plaza Beatas 3, Barcelona, Spain. Reprints one of Crumb's grossest Mr. Natural stories in Spanish.

FROM GRIOT TO RAP

Let's lay off the teenagers!

It's important to note what happened in the early 1970s that inspired the latest manifestation of the African oral tradition. Young black and Latino youth in New York City found themselves disenfranchised from black radio. Until then, young black males listened to radio more than any other ethnic group. Black radio, through its D.J.s, served the role of cultural griot. However, in the early '70s, an emphasis was placed on attracting an older and more affluent demographic audience. Translation: a white audience. Young people were left without an important medium that reflected their tastes, and in this country many people get a sense of worth via the media. At the same time, New York's flourishing gang culture was being quelled in a major move to eliminate such notorious entities. Gangs are often formed because youth are seeking reaffirmation. So you had two major facets of youth culture being X's out and a void was created. When people find themselves in a situation where they're being made expendable, They will create a separate reality. They did and it's called hip-hop. The same thing happened with punk, go-go, and house.) Keep in mind that hip-hop was the culture from which rap (plus breakdancing and graffiti art) emerged.

David Cook. BAM, 9-6-91

I'm a little bugged with all this tv gang promo. Quite simply, it's a lot of negative horseshit designed to alienate parents and children and keep the bucks flowing into the corporate coffer. Every day I see teenage gangs this and that and always accompanied with a lot of rap about violence and crime and drugs. Gimme a fucking break here. These are government sponsored ghetto control drugs and the kids who get caught up in this scam are the victims not the villains. Let's look at it all from a different perspective for a minute.

A group of teenagers in uniforms on the athletic field is a team, right? Yet, the same group of teenagers in Raiders jackets downing a slurpee at the local 7-11 suddenly becomes a dangerous teenage gang. A group of teenaged women jumping up and down in skimpy leotards and skirts as they cheer mindlessly on the sidelines of a gym floor is a squad of cheerleaders, but the same group of women in imitation leather jackets and easter egg dyed hairdoes smoozing in front of a local punk club miraculously becomes a teenage gang. How come a group of albies getting shitfaced at their local bar isn't considered a dangerous gang of reckless drivers? Why don't we ever read stories about the gangs of violent frustrated housewives stoned on valium or librium who hang around the malls and the laundromats?

Grown-ups seldom ask the right questions when they try to understand teenage behavior. Teens gather in groups for the same reasons as adults, for friendship, protection, and the other satisfactions of social intercourse. The difference is that teen behavior is visible, out there, while adult behavior often isn't. The average drug addict in this country is not a Saturday night crack smoker in the ghetto in spite of what your tv tells you. The major addict is a middle aged white professional who does his drugs in his home or in his Mercedes. Teenagers do not have their own space, so they go to the malls and the drive-ins or hang out on a favorite street corner. If they go to their parents' homes, they are not free to be themselves. They have to conform to parental rules. The teens then who want to assert themselves and try making some of their own decisions have no choice but to hang out somewhere outside their parents' domain. As you go down the social ladder you find more people outside than in because there is simply no room for them inside. If you have ever seen a one or two bedroom apartment you know full well that it gets smaller and smaller as the kids grow up. Four kids might live there, but four teenagers? Not without trying to kill one another for a little privacy.

It might surprise you to know that teenagers don't hate their parents. They hate control. The weaker give in, but the stronger fight back and, in our society, to fight back is to get into crime and go to prison. American prisons are filled with teenagers from the lower echelon who fought back and got punished for it. Since there are few ways for teens to fight back, they get satisfaction in small ways. Mom buys the clothes and dictates this and that, so a teen woman fights back through fashion. She buys and wears costumes her mother hates. The entire Madonna syndrome of the eighties and early nineties can be explained this way. Suburban mothers saw Madonna's black teddies and see through blouses as tarty and tasteless. She was dressing like a tramp and teaching their daughters to dress the same way. In a second, she was totally cool and ten year old kids were parading around the mall in skintight clothing and garish make-up. Mothers who resisted the image were tortured with pouting and anorexia. The smarter moms simply accepted it all and let the phase pass. I'm sure many of the young women who could not get satisfaction out of Madonna drag turned to Easter egg punk or shaved their heads and wore mutilation jewelry. Teen is always hormonally extreme and on any campus in 1991 you see the ultra-conformists rah-rahing the team in their neatly pressed little uniforms while the sneering punkettes light up cigarettes and adjust their noserings a few steps away. Between the extremes are all the others, the median mass that is never here nor there in this world. They seldom give their parents a lot of trouble, but they don't give them much joy either.

Corporate America doesn't care either way as long as everyone buys the products. Beer and cigarette commercials are a serious social danger, but these are so much a part of the corporate power structure that little can be done about them. Alcohol and nicotine kill more people each year than any of the falsely labeled hard drugs like cocaine and heroin.

Tv commercials teach the young that people are so much meat to be bought and sold on the market. Success is presented in terms of money and power and we see fewer and fewer examples of young people rewarded for being loyal friends, honest in their day to day lives, and basically humanitarian in their relationships with the other members of their community. People are judged by what they have, not how they came to have it, and any student of American history knows full well that the major fortunes in this country were obtained by theft and murder.

In contemporary America the child and the teenager, the young adult, the Junior Miss, and all of the other sales categories are simply marketing hustles designed to separate people from their money and keep them deeply in debt. Business has a vested interest in creating and nurturing teenage rebellion and we should realize that there is big money to be made through the exploitation of puberty, that our children will continue to be turned against us as long as we accept this exploitation as natural.

It is not.

The teen rebel, the alienated gang member, is a media creation just as the loyal family member was in the days of radio and earlier tv. This image is maintained and justified in the board rooms because it sells, but it destroys the structure of the family at the same time. Insidious, isn't it? In a unified family, everyone might watch tv together, but divide the family and you can sell several tv sets and have everyone watching different programs in different rooms.

I can't stress enough here how insidiously people have been conditioned to

accept the carefully packaged images promoted second by second on network television, images which are not real and do not function to maintain community solidarity. Television is selling you an image of fear and deliberately alienating you from your children. How often do you see TEEN GANG DRUGS VIOLENCE reiterated as an associational construct? Hundreds of times a week? Thousands? When was the last time you read about an ADULT GANG ON VALIUM trashing a shopping center? I get really tired of this bullshit, folks. 15,000 teens can go to a rap concert and two or three guys get into a fight and one gets shot and 15,995 people are collectively guilty by association. Bullshit. Write about the fights in the parking lot at Candlestick during a 49ers game. There are always fights on and off the field during certain games and they are never news. Why not? Why does the media want you to be afraid of and for your children? Is it because this distracts you from paying attention to the real social problems in this country, to the Savings and Loan rip-off, to the expansionist plans of the government in third world countries? To the millions of people who are unemployed and homeless?

In every urban center in America a few young people have turned to dealing crack cocaine for their livelihood. These young people do not import the coke from Peru and Bolivia and Colombia. They are the victims, not the villains. These drugs are no more or less dangerous than any other drugs. A middle-class woman stoned on valium is just as likely to run over someone in a crosswalk as is a kid on crack, even more so since the crack high only lasts half an hour or less and the valium lasts for a few hours. Alcohol kills more teenagers each year than any other drug. Go to your local library and look at the statistics for yourself. Older adults on combinations of alcohol and medication are a deadly threat to all of us and they never make the front page!

--Clay Geerdes 11/10/91

For the truth about the drug business in this country, see Brian Freemantle's **THE FIX**, in which he says the entire economy of Florida is now dependent upon the South American drug trade. Michael Levine, an ex-DEA agent proclaims the entire war on drugs a complete lie in **DEEP COVER**.

OZOPHILES' CORNER

Brave New Words **OZ SQUAD 1** is a lot better than I had expected it to be. It is true to the Baum stories in a way the films have never been and whether this is good, bad, or indifferent will depend upon your tastes. The first chapter deals with Tik-Tok and bears similarities to John Sladek's **TIK TOK** [1983]. Both show what would happen if the mechanical robot were to lose his morality factor. This factor goes back to Asimov's law for robots back in **I, ROBOT** which states in essence that robots are prohibited from performing any action which would lead to the harm of their makers. I won't summarize this story anymore than I do any other comic, but I want to say that the research is right on so Oz purists will enjoy the story. Dorothy has been modernized and restyled, but the artwork is very well done and will not offend fans of Denslow or Neill. If you can't find this locally, write to the company at POB 20421, Providence, RI 02920. \$3.25 should cover a copy. There is another Shanower Oz book due, but there is no word from First about who will wind up doing it.

KITCHEN SINK has a set of Robert Crumb trading cards available.



Eros has published **THE COLLECTED PURPLE PICTOGRAPHY** which shows how well Berni Wrightson drew in contrast to Vaughn Bodé. The **PICTOGRAPHY** pages ran in **SWANK** back in the early seventies. \$3.50.



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AMERICAN SPLENDOR 16 is on sale. A great cover and a number of Harvey Pekar's stories and vignettes. He has a nice discussion of black and white relations in which he justifies writing about black people using the rhythms of their speech as well as their patois. I agree with this. I think writers and artists have to fight against the political repression underway in this world and one way we fight is to keep the lines of communication open between the races and sexes.

FALLOPIAN FOOTBALL

And did you know that no less than 11 women tried out for junior-high football in the Sumner School District in Bonney Lake, Washington? As I sit here, Bertha Guevara of Lakeridge Junior High is adjusting her shoulder pads. She's 5'7 and weighs in at 127 pounds. Plays tackle. Ciseley Wingate is an offensive guard on the varsity at Pullman High. I don't know why this even made it into the newspapers, frankly. For several years I followed women's rugby here in Berkeley and if you think these women take it easy on each other, you wrong, Baby! Rugby, of course, is real football. The stuff you see on tv played by guys wearing all that plastic and rubber armor doesn't even compare. I know a lot of you have never heard of rugby and if you have you think it is something they only do in England, but you would be wrong. We have a dozen or so teams locally and they play people from all over the world. I've seen some great games and even the so-so games have been more exciting than organized football. You never see rugby on television, of course, because it is an amateur sport. How's that for a joke?

MICHAEL JACKSON: WHITE AT LAST

I saw the MTV special the other night [late November that was] and it ended with a revised version of Michael Jackson's latest which ought to be called Michael Jackson: White At Last. If there is any recent political trend that wasn't exploited in that video, it's too local to matter. I loved seeing all those beautiful well fed little kids dressed in rags to represent the hungry of the world. Hey, Michael is rich enough to feed half of the tribes in Africa and South America just on one royalty check. The products he endorses are designed to rot your teeth and fill the pockets of corporate clients who are directly responsible for keeping most of this world in slavery. Jackson spends enough money on plastic surgery in a single year to feed and clothe all the homeless workers in Detroit and Chicago. I see MTV as nothing but corporate brainwash, a mass of useless and often dangerous products juxtaposed with personalities who have turned themselves into product composites. The misguided who spend their time picketing adult video stores for their kids' sake ought to spend five minutes looking at the kind of degrading image of woman that is being driven into their kids' skulls via MTV. With an election coming up, we can expect to see these clods paraded before us on the six o'clock news while the same lying office seekers run off at the mouth about porn as they ignore the serious economic depression going on in this country.

What's MTV? Mighty Terrible Video. Massive Tits on View. Many Tortured Vermin. Mothers' Torrid Visions. Mostly Tactless Violence. Mainly Tacky Violence. Mutant Turtle Vistas. Make up your own.

Well, I see 3,976 people just passed the local bar exam, bringing the total of lawyers in California to 132,000. That's in case you wonder why modern life is getting more and more complicated. All corporations have lawyers on staff and these legal beagles have to justify their existence so they keep on filing lawsuits. I had one experience with a lawsuit back in the early seventies and it taught me all I needed to know. This was a personal injury suit against a cab company. It was cut and dried. I was run down in a crosswalk by a driver who ran a red light. I wasn't badly hurt and this was a penny ante deal for the lawyer who took it. The whole thing took four years-FOUR YEARS! and I got \$637 out of a \$1500 settlement. Lawyers take PI cases on contingency which means they get a third of the settlement plus expenses. The cab company lawyer offered me \$375 to sign a waiver while I was half-conscious in the hospital waiting room, but I declined. I didn't know how badly I was hurt. Turned out I was just bruised up and you have to be mangled all to hell before any big bucks figure in the game. There are a number of well to do paraplegic and quadriplegics around Berkeley, but, frankly, I don't want to trade places with the electric wheelers. There's a guy uptown who has one of those specialized vans that cost some insurance company nearly a hundred grand.

Anyway, 132,000 lawyers. Whew! That means the chances are very good that the guy next to you in the post office line is one.

WILD MAN!

I've seen a lot of parodies of the new Wild man thing lately, you know, guys trying to get back to their primitive roots by meeting in hunting lodges and imitating the behavior of various Indian tribes. The argument is that modern man is so covered up with fashion and technology that he has lost touch with his meat self. Well, we still have out rites and rituals, but they have become symbolic. Something like The Terminator is about how difficult it is to escape the past. All entertainment is vestigial ritual. We no longer have to suffer the pain and strain and boredom of the hunt. We can watch it on tv or in a mall cineplex. So the blood is karo syrup and vegetable dye and the android's arm is a lot of plastic and latex, big deal. It looks real enough. It's been a long time since anyone really hunted. Even the guys in the makinaws with the pick-up trucks are techno hunters. They don't hike out there in the wild. They drive their trucks and listen to their Willie Nelson tapes on the way. They wouldn't know any more about making an arrowhead from a stone and a bow from a branch of pine than I would. They use the latest guns with laserscopes and the majority don't even clean their own kills. So I have to grin at this new men's ritual trip. Business guys getting back to their primitive selves in lodges with central heating and catered buffets. Makes a cute sitcom, but for a kid who grew up in Nebraska and had to live through a few real hunting trips--well, count me out.

The Owl Gallery [465 Powell St., San Francisco] is presenting a retrospective of the work of animator Bob Clampett during the month of December, 1991. Animation cells from the Beany and Cecil shows will be displayed. Info from Carmen Pirics, 415-781-5464.

Diane Noomin edited a collection of Bad Girl Art entitled **TWISTED SISTERS**. The book includes work by Carol Lay, Phoebe Gloeckner, Krystine Kryttre, Julie Doucet, et al. If you got off on the original comic books, you'll wax nostalgic over this stuff. Check your local comic book store for this one.

CEREBUS 152 is now on sale.

Marvel has just published **SUBURBAN JERSEY NINJA SHE-DEVILS**, which has to be one of the sickest comic books of the year. It begins with a vampire murdering a five-year-old child and gets worse. This is no underground with Adults only pasted all over the cover and it has the approval of the Comics Code Authority pasted prominently on the cover. Shows you what a joke that code is. Steve Gerber, who did **HOWARD THE DUCK**, is responsible for this nightmarish sewage.

The City Limits Gazette is still happening under the editorship of Steve Willis and I still see a bit about Morty the Dog here and there. **Newave comix** are still around, you know. With each new generation of cartoonists comes a new run of minicomix. Send Steve a buck and check out an issue of the Gazette. POB 390, McCleary, WA 98557-0390.

Two newave comix out from Paul Kent Sewell. **A DATE WITH DEATH** and **RIGHTEOUS BLACK WOMAN**. \$1.50 pp for both. 540 Stoneford Ave., Oakland, CA 94603.

The Shitkickin' Kid #7 is 50¢/stamp from Greg Stromberg, 303 S. 5th St., Oregon, IL 61061.



DEC 14 90 B. CASLOR



Penguin books has issued a **RAW** oneshot by Ben Katchor. **CHEAP NOVELTIES: The Pleasures of Urban Decay**. Check it out at your local comic book store. Looks like **RAW** has come to an end. So saith Arte Spiegelman in a recent interview.

THE COMPLETE CRUMB is up to Volume 7. The latest has a couple of pages of the great Crumb's egotistical nostalgic ramblings for an introduction and a lot of reprinted material from the master's early books.

There is now a companion to **I'N LIVING COLOR**. Written by Nelson George, it contains a lot of photos and several scripts. This is the show that has the balls **SATURDAY NIGHT LIVE** used to have.

EL VIBORA 142 is \$9 pp from Jose M. Berenguer, Plaza Beatas 3, 08003 Barcelona, Spain. The Barcelona gang has a new title **KISS COMIX 1** for the same price. **KISS** is all sex. Adults only on all underground comix! Send an age statement with first order.

Yes, Virginia, there is another **TELEGRAPH AVENUE STREET CALENDAR**! The 1992 edition is \$8 pp from Ace Backwards, 1630 University Avenue, Apt. 26, Berkeley, CA 94703. The Hate Man is on the cover and quite simply this is like nothing you have ever seen before or will ever see again.

I just finished reading the last few issues of Terry Laban's **UNSUPERVISED EXISTENCE**. I've noticed Terry's political cartoons in the last few issues of **IN THESE TIMES** and been quite impressed. He's a realist with a nice range of characters. **UE6** deals with what happens when your woman friend has an affair with another woman. The panels laid around this page are from various issues of **UE** and should give you an idea of Laban's style.



For reasons that have to do with the origins of the United States, Americans will never accept any literature that does not plainly support the prejudiced and aspirations of a powerful and bigoted middle class which is now supplementing its powerful churches with equally powerful universities where what is said and thought and imagined is homogenized to a degree that teachers and students do not begin to suspect because they have never set foot outside the cage that they were born in. Like the gorilla who was taught to draw, they keep drawing the bars of their cage, and think it is the world.

--Gore Vidal